THE WRITTEN WORD

REV S. G. GREEN, D.D.

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THE WRITTEN WORD;

OR,

THE CONTENTS AND INTERPRETATION

OF

HOLY SCRIPTURE BRIEFLY CONSIDERED.

BY

SAMUEL G. GREEN, D.D.,

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Several chapters of this work were written for the *Sunday School Union Magazine* in the year 1865, and are now republished in compliance with the expressed desire of readers to whom their statements and reasonings have been helpful.

The opportunity has been taken of making large additions, with some alterations; in order to present the topic with as much approach to completeness as the limits of a small volume would allow.

Readers who may take up the book for their own guidance, or for assistance in teaching, are earnestly requested to study the passages of Scripture quoted, in the order and connection in which they are introduced. Reference without comment is all that in most cases could be given: but there is no part of the work to which greater care has been devoted.

To state great principles, and to suggest methods of wise and profitable study, has throughout been

the writer's aim. When these are well defined, the Bible will speak for itself with power: while neglect of them leads to a desultory, purposeless and unprofitable use of the Sacred Volume. In a Scripture-reading nation like ours, it is often wonderful to see what ignorance exists as to what the Bible really is and what it contains.

The author hopes also that many readers may be induced to follow out the lines of thought here traced, by the aid of those larger and more comprehensive treatises which treat in detail of the several points discussed. To such works many references have been given; with the view not only of confirming the views and statements advanced, but of guiding the thoughtful reader—for some few further steps, at least,—in what is surely the noblest and most self-rewarding of all studies; a study in which the interest can never fail, and which no lifetime can exhaust.

Rawdon College,
November, 1870.

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CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY.

THE Holy Scriptures may be defined, in their broadest sense, as the inspired record of a continuous Divine Revelation.

Inspiration and Revelation are to be carefully distinguished. The latter is the direct communication from God to man, especially of supernatural truths; the former expresses the influence under which "holy men of God" have recorded the Divine communications.

"A supernatural communication of truth from God," says Dr. Bannerman, "is a *revelation;* the supernatural transference of the truth to the spoken or the written word, is *inspiration;* and the distinction between the two things is one which has almost always been recognised by theologians, and often pointed out with more or less accuracy.* "Revelation and Inspiration," says Archdeacon Lee, "are also to be distinguished by the sources from which they proceed; Revelation being the peculiar function of the eternal Word; Inspiration, the result of the agency of the Holy Spirit." †

To exhibit the different steps of the progressive

* "Inspiration: the infallible truth and Divine authority of the Holy Scriptures," by James Bannerman, D.D., Edinburgh, p. 157

† "The Inspiration of Holy Scripture, its nature and proof:" Eight Discourses preached before the University of Dublin, by William Lee, D.D. Third Edition, 1864, p. 29.

revelation, and to suggest the leading principles on which the record is to be interpreted, is the purpose of this little volume.

One preliminary suggestion with respect to the question of Inspiration appears important. The *idea* is one of those so common to Scripture, of which no explicit Scriptural definition is given. Thus we are told that "God spake by Moses," that "holy men of old spake by the Holy Ghost," and that "every scripture inspired by God is also profitable for doctrine, for conviction, for correction, for discipline which is in righteousness."* Here the practical value of inspired writings is plainly declared; the method, the extent, and the criteria of inspiration are not stated. Now these can be ascertained only in one way, namely, by an inspection of the writings themselves. Whatever phenomena these present, are the phenomena of inspiration. It has been too common to adopt an opposite method, and by *à priori* reasoning to decide what *must* be the characteristics of an inspired book. The basis of the argument has thus been some notion or pre-conception of our own, and not the facts as we have actually found them. It has been assumed, for instance, that the very words of the record were of necessity divinely dictated,† that no imperfections of

* 2 Tim. iii. 16. We adopt Dean Alford's translation, believing that it expresses the sense of the original more nearly than the current version. Bishop Ellicott gives precisely the same turn to the first clause in the verse. "Every divinely-inspired writing" would be more literal still.

† The reasoning has been as follows:—We think only through

language or style could have existed, that no inaccurate conceptions of natural phenomena or of human history could have been suffered to intrude. If Scripture touches therefore on the sphere of science, it must be philosophically accurate. Discrepancies in the narration of facts cannot be admitted; it is necessary for our faith to reconcile or harmonise them—no matter by what strained and laborious plans. Men's belief in the Divine Word, it was once held, would be imperilled by the doctrine of the earth's motion, or by the presumed existence of antipodes; in like manner it is now maintained that if Scripture can be shown to contain, for instance, a scientific inaccuracy, the Christian's dearest faith is gone. Surely this is unwise. We have no right to prescribe to God the method of His address to men. He employs human instruments, and it is not for us to say how far He will permit the human element—the element of imperfection—to characterise the vehicle of His communications. Let us but be sure that He has spoken to us: and our further questions as to the form and mode of His speech can only be solved by our study of the oracles themselves. A definition of Inspiration should be the end and not the beginning of our research.

In the following pages, we take for granted that God has spoken, and reverently attempt to follow His chief utterances, that we may trace their meaning and appli-

the medium of language: hence thoughts must have been communicated by words, and to *inspire* is necessarily to *dictate*. The conclusion may be a truth; but it wants some better premises than the axioms of a doubtful philosophy.

cation. Questions of evidence on the one hand, and of detailed criticism on the other, we do not attempt. This ground has already been traversed repeatedly, and with consummate skill.* Our object is to illustrate those leading principles which bear on the interpretation and manifold application of the Sacred Word. We address ourselves especially to Sunday School Teachers, not attempting to supply material ready wrought for use, but to assist them in their thoughts about Divine truth.

The basis of our discussion will be found in a series of lessons, prepared by the Sunday School Union, for the successive months of 1871, following a similar but less extended course in 1865, in connexion with which many of the following papers were first written.†

The several lessons, with the Scripture passages chosen to illustrate them, are arranged in the following order:—

Jan. 15. *State of the World without the Bible.*—Isaiah xliv. 9—20. Acts xiv. 1—18.

Feb. 19. *Early Divine Revelations.*—Exodus iii. 1—15 ; xxiv.

Mar. 19. *The Book of the Law.*—Deut. vi. *Israel's Bible.*—Psalm cxix. 33—48.

April 10. *The Word of Prophecy.*—Isaiah vi.; Jer. xxv. 1—14.

May 21. *Christ's Testimony to the Bible.*—Luke iv. 14—32; John vi. 31—47.

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* We need only refer the reader to Dr. Angus's "Bible Hand-book," to Nichol's "Scripture Guide," and to the recently published "Introduction to the Study of the Bible," by Dr. Barrows, of New York.

† See "Sunday School Union Magazine," 1865, Feb. to Dec.

June 18. *The New Testament Scriptures.*—Acts x. 34—43; Rev. i. 4—20.

July 16. *God's care of the Old Testament.*—2 Kings xxii. 8—xxiii. 3. *Glory of the New Testament.*—2 Cor. iii.

Aug. 20. *The Bible superior to Nature.*—Psalm xix. *Superior to Tradition.*—1 Tim. iv.

Sep. 17. *Harmony of the Bible.*—Luke xxiv. 13—32. *Its Unchangeableness.*—Psalm cxix. 89—112.

Oct. 15. *The Bible a Sacred Trust.*—Nehemiah viii. *How to study it.*—Acts xvii. 1—12.

Nov. 19. *The Bible intended for all.*—Romans x. *Adapted for the young.*—2 Tim. iii. 14—iv. 8.

Dec. 17. *Christ the substance of the Bible.*—Isaiah liii,; Acts xiii. 14—43.

CHAPTER II.

STATE OF THE WORLD WITHOUT THE BIBLE.

PRIOR to all considerations respecting the Book itself, we naturally inquire into the necessity for its existence. Without the Bible, what was the condition of mankind?

The question is but part of a larger one As we have seen, the Scriptures record a revelation—*the* revelation. Other revelations are supposable; and this particular one might have been given, either without a record, or with records of another kind. In the broadest form, therefore, we may ask, How would men have fared without a revelation at all? Next, What would be their condition without such a revelation as *this?* Next, What would it be without a revelation *so recorded?*

Now, with regard to the first form of question, we remark, that men have never been, literally and altogether, without a revelation from God. This may be shown in two ways:—

1. First, there is in man's own nature a faculty of discernment, judgment, reasoning, the right exercise of which will lead to some knowledge of God.

"The heathen," says the apostle Paul, are "without excuse;" and why? Because the "invisible" truths

of God's "eternal power and Godhead" are manifest in "the things which are made," duly studied and understood. Then, besides this, which may be called the intellectual aspect of the question, there is the testimony of man's moral nature. Conscience, while perverted, is not destroyed, but recognises, although it could not discover, the right and the true. The "work of the law" is a thing already "written on the hearts" of the heathen themselves. Hence, to a certain extent, there is a revelation in and to every man. The Epistle to the Romans gives, in chapter i. 19—21, the intellectual, and in ii. 14, 15, the moral view of the subject.

The question then arises, is this revelation accepted, acknowledged, obeyed? It is not, the apostle solemnly replies. And why? Because (Rom. i. 18) men "hold," rather *hold down*, restrain, or keep back, "the truth in their unrighteousness."* Hence the need of a further, clearer, more authoritative revelation from above, and the second of the above questions is partially answered. Another *kind* of revelation is needed, a direct testimony from heaven, superadded to the testimony within.

2. Such a revelation was actually given in the earliest ages. When men wandered from Babel they

* So the best critics explain the verse. Those against whom "the wrath of God is revealed" do not "hold" the truth, but repress it, so as to prevent its having its due influence upon them. The verb is employed as in 2 Thess. ii. 6 ("withholdeth"), and verse 7, ("letteth") also Luke iv. 42 ("stayed"). Unquestionably, it has elsewhere the sense of holding fast, as 1 Thess. v. 21, Luke viii. 15 ("keep").

carried with them everywhere the remembrance, and handed down the tradition, of heavenly truth and divine law. Some bright glimpses of such truth, which the ancient heathen appear to have possessed, and which we hear of still as existing in China and India, bear undoubted traces of divine teaching. It has indeed been maintained that the power to originate a true religion has thus been manifested. But a closer inquiry will prove that the beliefs in question are but corrupted relics and distorted reflections of the ancient revelation.* Instead of developing into a noble system, these fragments of the old world's creed are more and more degenerating into evil superstitions. The world is travelling "daily farther from the east"—from the bright sunrise, some rays of whose transient splendour, lingering yet upon the fringe of the darkness which "covers the nations," are interpreted by misjudging observers as the herald of another dawn.

From the partial revelation, then, which we discern in Reason, Conscience, and Memory, we see only the more forcibly how urgent is the need for some further utterance from Heaven. Practically, mankind without the Bible, although possessing the two helps last spoken of, are without a revelation.

Their condition in these circumstances must be chiefly judged by facts. But in classifying these facts three general remarks may be useful:

* This is proved especially by the distorted fragments of primæval *history*, connected with these relics. The traditions of the Fall and of the Flood, especially, are found in almost every mythology of the world.

1. First of all, the knowledge of spiritual and divine truth is requisite.

2. This knowledge must be given on a basis of sufficient authority.

3. It must be distinctly and inseparably connected with holiness.

Of any so-called revelation these must be the tests:—Does it tell us what they did not, could not otherwise know? Does it speak with absolute authority? Do its communications tend to holiness? Here we rest our claim on behalf of the Bible. It "enlightens the eyes," by its communications of truth; it "converts the soul," by its word of power; and it "rejoiceth the heart," because it is right, and because its righteousness is an embodiment of divine love.

The contrast is appalling. In the first place, the world without the Bible is ignorant; secondly, the beliefs and opinions to which men may perchance attain rest on no sufficient authority; and thirdly, mankind are, in consequence, unholy and unhappy.

1. The world is ignorant. Great questions there are to which all men need an answer,—"Whence came I?" "How ought I to live?" "What will become of me after death?" These questions lie at the basis of religion; and all men, not thoroughly imbruted, have striven as best they could to solve them. What has been the result? Take, first, the wisest and best of the heathen. We need not range over the whole world; for in one chosen spot, and through a series of illustrious generations, we have man at his best while left to himself. Of course we speak of Greece, and of those five

hundred years which Homer inaugurated with poetry, and Plato crowned with philosophy.* The experiment of what men could know, what men could do, was tried under most favourable circumstances. Never, perhaps, have such strong and radiant intellects appeared, in long succession, among the sons of men. And the result? They thought there must be a God; they hoped that virtue and holiness were not unattainable on earth; and in their loftier moods they even dreamed of another world! But philosophy, unable to sustain itself, disappeared amid empty speculation and wordy disputes; while the religious attainment of those famous generations culminated at Athens, in an altar with this inscription, "To an Unknown God." This was all that man could do. True, the religious instinct, which could not be wholly repressed, filled the lands with idols, which the commonalty worshipped and the philosophers despised. But these were themselves a sign—nay, a confession of ignorance. The wooden or the graven image was regarded by all thoughtful worshippers as the sign of a *hidden* power, distant, inscrutable, undiscoverable. An orphan world, consciously far from its Parent and its home, amuses itself with drawing pictures, which it fondly but vainly imagines may be like its Father's face. But in the being thus imagined there is no love. "They called on the name of Baal from morning even until noon, saying, 'O Baal, hear us!'" yea, "they prophesied until the time of the evening sacrifice: but there was

* The Homeric poems were probably written in the ninth century, B.C., say about 850; Plato died B.C. 347.

neither voice, nor any to answer, nor any that regarded," 1 Kings xviii. 26, 29.

Homer, in the "Odyssey," brings his hero on a visit to the Elysian fields,—the heaven of the ancient world, where the souls of heroes and of sages were supposed to dwell. He meets Achilles there, most renowned of warriors, and surely, according to the notions of Homer's age, most deserving of a blissful immortality. "As thou art reigning mightily over the dead," says Ulysses, "be not grieved at having died." What is the reply? Achilles says, "I would rather upon earth be the servant of the meanest hind that tills the ground, than hold dominion over all the realms of the departed."* Such was the fairest hope of immortality which even a poet's soul could attain.

But, secondly, there is need of authority to commend the truth when found. Destitute of the Scriptures, with their varied and awful sanction, the world could never attain this. There is immense difference between a guess and a discovery. The former may be correct, but cannot be proved; and, therefore, cannot command belief. A man, indeed, may be confident that his conjecture is right; but he needs some further means of establishing the confidence in other minds. This the wisest of the heathen never had. Hence the prevailing tone of the thoughtful was that of scepticism. Plato and his followers taught a nobler immortality than Homer's; but the belief could by no means be inwrought

* "Odyssey," xi. 483—490. It may be observed that Dante makes the "Elysian Fields" of the ancients the highest circle of the *Inferno*.

into the mind of the generation, or of succeeding ages. Dean Merivale, in his Boyle Lectures, for 1864, on the "Conversion of the Roman Empire," refers to an historic incident which most forcibly brings out this fact. The relater is Sallust, the Roman historian. The scene is the Roman senate, in the year 63 B.C., on the fifth of December; the question, the punishment of Catiline and his fellow-conspirators. In this memorable debate Cæsar speaks, and argues for sparing the life of the criminals; for, he adds, "Death is the release from all suffering, not suffering itself: death dissolves all the ills of mortality; beyond it is no place either for pain or pleasure." In Mr. Merivale's forcible words, "Cæsar himself, the chief pontiff, the highest functionary of the State religion, the chosen interpreter of divine things to the national conscience, declared peremptorily that there is no such thing as retribution beyond the grave, no future state of consciousness, no immortality of the soul." To Cæsar, Cato rose to reply, —"the most *religious* man at Rome, inasmuch as, of all the Romans of his day, there was none who set before himself so high a rule of life, or so strictly kept it; a man with a nearer sense of a personal inspiration —of the indwelling of a divine spirit, than any heathen, except perhaps one or two only, with whom we are acquainted" And how did Cato speak on the great question which Cæsar had raised? With one light sentence of banter only; so light as to show that no religious feeling was shocked, no religious conviction disgusted. And another great man took part in the debate, Cicero, the consummate orator, and gifted

student of philosophy, referring as he speaks to Cæsar's assertion, "not as caring to give his own assent or dissent upon the question, but leaving it perfectly open to the learned or the pious, to the statesman or the legislator, the pontiff and augur, to embrace or repudiate it as he pleases. We read of no further discussion upon the point, upon this blank negation of all spiritual faith and hope; the historian takes no personal notice of it; no writer of antiquity alludes to it; it passes as a matter of general indifference."*

There was nothing, even in the grandest doctrines of which these ancient heathen may have had a glimpse, to create earnestness or to constrain belief. Their motto was PERHAPS. How different from Paul's, "I know in whom I have believed!"

And those who could not certainly believe could not teach "as having authority." They *perhaps* destroyed all the power of the old-world teachers over the masses. With regard to those greatest of questions above mentioned, the multitude had absolutely no opinion. Like the bird, of which in the well-known story the Saxon chieftain spoke, they flitted from the darkness without into the well-lighted banquet-hall, then out into the darkness again, knowing nothing of the regions to which its flight would be directed. Knowing nothing —and there was none with a right to tell, until the revelation of God brought life and immortality to light.

Thirdly, the great characteristic of a true revelation will be holiness. It must embody a law to show men what they ought to be, and an influence to direct them

*See Sallust, Catilina, 51, 52; Cicero against Catiline, iv. 4.

to obey. Now the Bible has all this. Its law is righteousness, its influence is love. But without a revelation the world possessed neither. Lawless, unloving,—how can its condition be more truthfully or more terribly described ?

Man destitute of a revelation from God is man left to himself. His own desires, dispositions, thoughts, and aims exhibit themselves in unchecked action. Or if there be a check, it is that which people's own self-interest or sense of expediency supplies. Now as men are depraved, selfish, and passionate, the consequence of their having their own way must be fearful. It is this, in fact, which so darkens the history of the world.

Without the Bible, they have had their own way in the imagination and invention of gods. These gods, therefore, have been the embodiment of their worst and most degrading passions. Every missionary field will supply abundant illustrations. The three forms of crime which it would seem as if nothing but a revelation from God could effectually rebuke are those of cruelty, falsehood, and lust. It is the same in all races, and has been the same in all ages. From the civilized Greek of Plato's time to the degraded South Sea Islander of our own, the heathen are, with but few exceptions, cruel, lying, lustful everywhere.*

These features characterised all social arrangements. Slavery was universal in heathen countries; new-born

* See details in Tholuck's well-known essay on "The Moral Influence of Heathenism;" also in Dr. Döllinger's "Gentile and Jew in the Courts of the Temple of Christ," translated by N. Darnell, 1862.

children, as a common practice, were exposed to perish; the indigent were uncared for. "No one of the thousands of rich men at Rome ever conceived the notion of founding an hospital for the poor or for the sick;"* the education of children corrupted and perverted their moral feelings; the public games and spectacles were "schools of barbarous cruelty and voluptuousness, places to dull the edge of every finer feeling in man, and to rouse and foster every animal principle." Human life was disesteemed; the punishment of malefactors was accompanied by cruel tortures; and suicide was accounted rather a virtue than a crime.

All these terrible particulars might be fully illustrated, but we only notice one question more. Have not these crimes flourished in the world with the Bible, and in professedly Christian communities? They have, undoubtedly; but always in distinct antagonism to Scripture influence and teaching. Wherever, too, the Bible has "had free course," these evil things have diminished or disappeared. Take, for instance, slavery, or cruelty in the punishment of malefactors. Now we know that both have endured long in communities blessed by the gospel. Yet it has always been seen that in the gospel there was a power to subdue them—a growing power. Slavery itself is all but extinct in every professedly Christian land.

How the Bible exerts such power, and by virtue of what principles, the subsequent chapters will show.

* Döllinger, vol. ii. p. 279.

CHAPTER III.

EARLY DIVINE REVELATIONS.

REVELATION at the outset was unconnected with a book. It is a question more curious than useful, perhaps, when the literature of the world began to take a permanent form. We know that in classic lands historical records were handed down from age to age by memory and recitation. In the Greek mythology, Mnemosyne, or Memory, was the Mother of the Muses; *i. e.*, in other words, the Parent of Literature.

It was by *tradition*, therefore, that the events and teachings of one generation were preserved for the use of another. Nor was the tradition necessarily corrupted in its course. Very much of the fixity of the written page was given to the oral history or law. There was an exactness of form as well as of substance in the traditionary records, which is quite unknown to generations practised in the use of the pen. This precision, it is well known, was insured by the use of poetic phrase and measure. Hence the earliest annals of almost all nations have been poems. The degree to which memory was cultivated, when writing and read-

* See the "Contemporary Review," August, 1870, for a valuable paper on "the Moabite Stone," by Professor Rawlinson with striking transcripts of early alphabets.

ing were arts comparatively unknown, is almost inconceivable now. Wandering bards would repeat their own poems, consisting of many thousand lines. Long records would become engraven by constant repetition upon many memories. The "tablets of the brain" were as full fraught with matter as is now the written page Literature has rendered comparatively useless the effort thus to store the memory, and the power therefore has been lost. To adopt the mythological allusion, we may say that the Muses in their growth have ungratefully crippled their mother Mnemosyne.

2. We need not now discuss how the art of writing arose. Whether the alphabet was a direct gift of Heaven, as some have maintained, or a modification of hieroglyphic pictures, as is now generally held, does not affect our present purpose.* It is certain that the first use made of the newly acquired method of expressing thought was in monumental records and inscriptions, in place of the symbols that had formerly been used. The rocks were the first "books" of the old world; and when the book was to be made portable, the readiest device was to prepare for the purpose a slab of stone.† Hence the use of the "tables of stone,"

* The reader, among books easily accessible, will find the earlier part of "The Book and its Story" bear very interestingly on these points. Mr. Nelson Coleridge's "Greek Classic Poets," pp. 85—94, may also be consulted; and there is a useful Monthly Volume of the Religious Tract Society, on the "Origin and Progress of Language."

† See Job xix. 23, 24, The "lead" was to be poured in a melted state into the excavations of the "iron pen." The

of which we read in Exod. xxiv. 12. (See also Deut. xxvii. 3—8, comp. with Josh. viii. 32.) Such, indeed, would be the readiest mode of "publishing" a document of grave importance. It is, however, plain from some passages that at this early period materials of another kind were already employed. The first mention of a book in Scripture* is in Exod. xvii. 14, before the giving of the law, "JEHOVAH said unto Moses, Write this (the discomfiture of Amalek) for a memorial in a book," or, *the* book, as the original reads, *i. e.*, in some divinely directed *history* of the achievements of Israel. In Numb. xxi. 14, again we read of "the book of the wars of the Lord;" but it is evident that this record is of a poetical character.

The book afterwards known as "the Law," is first explicitly mentioned in Exod. xxiv. In ver. 4 it is stated, "Moses wrote all the words of Jehovah," *i. e.*, the statutes, beginning with the Ten Commandments, and contained in Exod. xx—xxiii. inclusive. This may be considered as the first draught or outline of the law—the earliest Bible in the true sense of the word—the "book of the covenant," as it is termed in ver. 7. From Deuteronomy we know that additions were from time to time made to this book, which by the close of the forty years' wandering had become known as "the book of the law." See Deut. xxviii. 58, 61; xxix. 21; xxx. 10, and consult chapter iii. of the present volume for further details.

book of Job is thought by many to be the most ancient part of Scripture. * "The book of the generations," in Gen. v. 1, is Haberaism for *genealogy*. See Matt. i. 1.

4. Thus, then, is the divine word first introduced to us in its twofold character of history and of law; and in the passages cited we have evidence, all the more forcible for being casual and fragmentary, for the early existence and recognition of the Pentateuch.

5. There were, however, earlier revelations, adapted to an age in which, as we have seen, writing was unknown or unfamiliar. Oral tradition perpetuated the utterances and revelations which at the first came direct from God; and the art of writing, of whose origin Scripture contains absolutely no trace,* did but perpetuate much that had already been spoken from heaven, and handed down amongst men.

Take, for instance, the history of creation, and of the fall, or the lives of the early patriarchs. It is impossible for us to suppose that the families who retained the worship of the true God were without direct divine information on these great matters. In what form, then, was the information given? Very possibly in the very shape in which the story has come down to us. Moses found the records already existing, well remembered; and when divinely directed to write

* "It is a remarkable fact that, although with respect to other arts—as, for instance, those of music and metal-working—the Hebrews have assigned the honour of their discovery to the heroes of a remote antiquity, there is no trace or tradition whatever of the origin of letters, a discovery many times more remarkable and important than either of these. Throughout the book of Genesis there is not a single allusion, direct or indirect, either to the practice or to the existence of writing."—*Biblical Dictionary*, vol. iii., p. 1788, art. "WRITING."

down the history and the law, he incorporated, just as they stood, these early annals and revelations. Whether, indeed, they had been committed to writing, or had possessed any visible monumental records before his day, we know not. There is strong probability, sustained by the ancient registers and monuments of scattered heathen nations, that the great events and leading names had been preserved by sculpture or hieroglyphics. So at least we account for the well-known delineations in India of the serpent beneath the heel of Vishnu; or in Mexico, of the lonely ark amid the waters. But apart from such presentation of Scripture facts to the eye, there was, we cannot doubt, a sacred tradition, a series of traditions, which the Hebrew lawgiver first embodied in "the Book." The traces of various origin and style in some parts of the early history are too clear to be explained away; and though the refinements of German scepticism have brought the "documentary hypothesis" into discredit,* there need be no real difficulty to the most devout in admitting that many sections of "the First Book of Moses" existed in the world long before the time of the great lawgiver.

6. In this sense, also, God never left Himself "without witness." To whom, and in what manner He spoke, are questions beyond us. One method of His communications was, however, indubitably more solemn and impressive than the rest.

As the world advances it grows more spiritual in its

* "Perhaps *undeserved* discredit."—"Bible Hand-book," part II., §. 10.

philosophy, and understands with a clearer, stronger conviction, that the world beyond the sphere of sense is distinctively the Unseen. Not so was it in the earlier ages. The manifestation of the spiritual to outward sense was no surprise. Nay, perhaps it was only by such manifestation that the spiritual could be known. Reason now may tell us of the invisible; but the processes of reason are long. The world could not wait for its knowledge of God until philosophers had demonstrated the First Cause, or until abstraction and analysis had, in their final result, wrought out a probable image of the Divine. No; the world needed to hear at once the Father's voice; and so God had mercy on it, and spoke.

7. Here it is that "the supernatural" enters the sphere of "the natural." The perfect reasonableness of such fellowship between the two has often been well shown.* But we have now only to do with the fact. And we find, further, that the times and occasions of the Divine self-revelation were those in which the soul of man is most especially disengaged from sense and physical associations, *i. e.*, "in dreams and visions."

It has always been felt that in "the visions of the night, when deep sleep falleth upon men," the spirit is nearer the realm of the supernatural than in the light and wakefulness of day. Shut out from the pressing perception of earthly things, the soul then has often shown a wondrous capability of being aroused to apprehend the realities of the unseen. More especially

* By none better than by Dr. McCosh, in his little work on "The Supernatural in its Relation to the Natural."

has this power been felt when the supernatural visitation has itself produced the effect of slumber, in sealing up the percipient faculties, and awakening the spiritual part of man. The "visions" of Scripture were not mere dreams, nor did they always require night and slumber as their conditions. The manifestation of God had closed the eyes to earthly things, the ears to earthly sounds. To the observer no doubt the subject of this influence would appear wrapt in deep sleep, or motionless trance; but in reality "the Lord spake unto him face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend," Exod. xxxiii. 11.

Such a vision was that vouchsafed to Abraham, as recorded Gen. xv. Before and after that era, similar revelations were accorded. So we understand the repeated announcements, "the Lord said unto Noah;" "the Lord said unto Abraham." In such a vision God commanded the sacrifice of Isaac, Gen. xxii. 1, 2. Such too was the revelation to Jacob when, upstarting from the slumbers on which the glory of heaven had dawned, he exclaimed, "Surely the Lord is in this place, and I knew it not!" xxviii. 16. To the same Jacob, in the decline of life, God spake again "in the visions of the night, and said, I am God, the God of thy father: fear not to go down into Egypt; for I will there make of thee a great nation," Gen. xlvi. 2, 3. In the same manner was the Prophet Isaiah in after ages commissioned for his work, "in the year that king Uzziah died," Isa. vi. Ezekiel, by the waters of Chebar, "saw visions of God," Ezek. i. 1. Joseph of Nazareth "was warned of God in a dream," Matt. ii.

22. Peter "fell into a trance," that in that state he might receive the symbolic revelation of God's universal love, Acts x. 9—16; and John, in Patmos, was "in the Spirit" when he heard the voice of One who said, "I am Alpha and Omega, the First and the Last," Rev. i. 10, 11. These are but illustrations of the divine plan, as shown in every age in which the word of Jehovah has been given in direct and outward form; and it will be a useful exercise for the Bible student to collect the records of the successive visions, from the word that came "in the cool of the day" in the Paradise which was already forfeited by sin, to the crowning Apocalyptic revelation of Paradise restored.

8. But it was not always needful that the recipient of the divine testimony should be in a state of slumber, trance, or ecstasy. Had this been the case, the revelation would have been open to the suspicion of unreality or delusion. There were occasions in which God displayed Himself in some symbolical outward form to man's waking senses, as when the three strangers came to Abraham in the plains of Mamre (Gen. xviii.), or when the mysterious flame pervaded yet consumed not the bush in Horeb, Exod. iii. Such a revelation was that on Sinai, accompanied, no doubt, by trance and the suspension of ordinary faculties (see Exod. xxxiv. 28); and yet, in many of its surroundings, very palpable and striking to the wakeful sense. All Israel saw the cloud upon the mountain that veiled the insufferable splendour; all heard the "voice of the trumpet" as it "sounded long and waxed louder and louder," while not Moses only, but Aaron, Nahab, and

Abihu, with the seventy elders, "*saw the God of Israel:* and under His feet as it were a paved work of a sapphire stone, and as it were the body of heaven in its clearness." The grandest types of the outward universe, the light, the burning flame, the rainbow in the cloud (see Ezek. i. 28; Rev. iv. 3), are employed on such occasions, solitary in their grandeur, as shadows, so to speak, of the spiritual world, types of a glory far beyond them all.

9. Thus, then, God has revealed Himself and has spoken to man. Such were the methods by which He first committed great truths concerning Himself and His ways to the human understanding and memory. It is not thus that He speaks to us; for we have the written record of the revelation, permanent, complete. Happier we than the holy men of old, for we have to wait for no new oracles from heaven. Happier again, as in the written volume we have a yet surer record than in the most widely-spread tradition. Happier still, in that the messenger and the message of truth are always with us. For persons of the olden time, it was a great thing when a herald of divine realities came to their door and spoke in the name of the Most High. But he went on his way, the voice was silent, they saw him no more, and soon perhaps forgot his words. Many a vision in ancient days came but to startle into remembrance those who had utterly "let slip" the things which they had heard; and the hours of privilege, in which the presence of God was apprehended and His oracles were received, contrasted sadly with the long periods of His apparent absence. But

the Bible is ever at our side; at any moment we may hear the voice of God. The "supernatural has so interwoven itself now into the "natural," as to need no special and peculiar manifestation. The "dream," though glorious, was but the accompaniment of the darkness, and the "visions" have faded, because the Gospel has led us into perfect day.

CHAPTER IV.

THE BOOK OF THE LAW.

HE "Bible" of the Israelite nation was threefold. First in sacredness, however, as in antiquity, was the Book of the Law. This name was borne by the Pentateuch as a whole, and was occasionally applied to the entire Jewish Scriptures. Prophet, historian, psalmist, were all held secondary to Moses, and all inspired writings beside were regarded as a supplement or appendix to the Law. Thus in the 119th Psalm we may often appropriately enough employ the word "Bible," or "Scriptures" where "the Law" is spoken of. In the New Testament also, the name is occasionally applied to every part of the Old Testament Canon. Thus our Lord appeals to the Jews (John x. 34):—"Is it not written in your law, 'I said, ye are gods.'" The quotation is really from the eighty-second Psalm. Again, in His farewell discourse to the disciples, the malice of His enemies is said to fulfil "the word that is written in their law, 'they hated me without a cause,'" (John xv. 25); where the reference is to Psalm xxxv. or lxix. The Apostle Paul also says (1 Cor. xiv. 12), "In the law it is written, 'With other tongues and other lips will I speak unto this people,'" quoting

from the prophecies of Isaiah, xxviii. 11, 12. Thus extended is the application of the term; indicating that the chief, the central idea of the Old Testament revelation is to be found in the Law.

Taking Law in its widest sense as the communication of a rule of duty, we cannot doubt that such was in part the character of primæval revelation. The great questions which must have pressed even upon the dwellers in Paradise, "Whence came we? How did this fair world spring into being? What is the issue and intent of all?" would manifestly yield in importance to the great practical enquiry, *How are we to act?* To this the voice of God would give a prompt and clear reply. There was then in Eden itself a Law, apart from the great ordinance respecting "the trees of the garden,"—the test of obedience to God. Still more was it needful, after the Fall, that some clear rules of life should be given. The existence of such rules is clearly indicated by such references as that to Enoch or to Noah, "he walked with God," Gen. v. 24; vi. 9. The "way of the Lord," (Gen. xviii. 19, must have included many laws. In Exodus xviii. 13—17, "the statutes of God and His laws," are distinctly mentioned before the giving of the law in Sinai. And if the patriarchal date of the book of Job is to be accepted, the manifold allusions there made to the Divine ordinances (while the Mosaic history is never mentioned,) are clear illustrations of God's early dealings with mankind. * See especially chapter xxiii. 11, 12.

* See "Biblical Researches," by Thomas Clarkson, 1839. Ancient Jewish Commentators give, as statutes called "The

"My foot hath held his steps, his way have I kept, and not declined. Neither have I gone back from the commandment of his lips; I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food."

But all such scattered intimations of the Divine will, were gathered up through the agency of Moses, and combined in the wilderness into that great code from which sprang the national life of Israel, and in which were contained the germs of truth that should prove a blessing and salvation to mankind.

Let us clearly keep in view the various purposes of this Law; and its manifold "fulfilment" in Christ will then be plain.

First, it was a republication of the universal law of duty. Here we speak chiefly of the Ten Commandments, which are often, but not quite accurately, called "the moral law." They are rather a presentation of part of this law,—that relating to God, and to one's neighbour *—in a form and with sanctions adapted to the Hebrew people. All but two (the fourth and fifth) are prohibitory. "Thou shalt not:" the fourth is partly so: the motives to obedience are derived from the people's own history, "I am JEHOVAH, thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the

Statutes of Adam," or "The Precepts of the Sons of Noah," "1. To abstain from Idolatry. 2. To worship the true God. 3. To shed no man's blood. 4. To refrain from Adultery. 5. To shun all Robbery. 6. To administer true justice."

* The moral law, in its largest significance, includes a man's duties to himself. Undoubtedly, these are, to a large extent, included in the others

house of bondage," (Exodus xx. 1). "Remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and that JEHOVAH, thy God, brought thee out thence, through a mighty hand, and by a stretched-out arm; therefore JEHOVAH thy God commanded thee to keep the Sabbath-day," (Deut. v. 15.) In like manner, "the commandment with promise," appeals to the people's dearest hopes with regard to Canaan, "that thy days may be long upon the land which JEHOVAH thy God giveth thee."

We are led then to regard the Law in two aspects; personal and national.

1. Its personal relations as is evident from the nature of the Ten Commandments, as well as from the circumstances amid which they were given, constituted from the first the centre of the whole scheme. Separate that which is essential in these august words from that which was temporal and restricted, and they declare what all men ought to be. The "First Table" embodies the principles of all religion, while it is in obedience to the Second that society becomes possible. The negative form is but the shadow of the most positive truth: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength; and thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."

But this was not the end of the divine teaching imparted on Sinai. No view of the Law can be complete which leaves out of sight its purpose in awakening conscience, in giving form and distinctness to the idea of

sin, in demonstrating also the need of another agency to bring the soul to God. "By law is the knowledge of sin." "The law entered, that the offence might abound." "The strength of sin is the law."* Sinai affords no deliverance, no strength to obey; amid all the majesty of its revelations, there is a confessed incompleteness, and the worshipper, like Moses fresh from the awful presence, still asks, "I beseech Thee, show me Thy glory,"—waiting until the thunders are succeeded by another voice; "The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth."† Thus does the Law await its consummation in the Gospel.

2. The Law, as a whole, was also the means employed by God in forming a nation for Himself. The commonwealth of Israel was its direct outgrowth; and the holy nation in its turn prepared the way for the universal church. Such is the divine history which the inspired volume records,—the accomplishment of an increasing purpose, to be realised only in the fulness of time. The KINGDOM of GOD is the theme of revelation; first the chosen family, then the separated nation, then the Messiah, whose kingdom is spiritual, and lastly, the proclamation for which the prophetic word still bids us hearken: "the kingdom of this world is become the kingdom of our God and of His Christ!" The heavenly order must begin by a people set apart; a theocracy or divine government, a collective, national

* See Romans iii. 20; iv. 15; v. 13, 20; vii. 7—13; Gal. iii. 19; 1 Cor. xv. 56; and compare John xv. 22.

† Exodus xxxiii. 18.—xxxiv. 6.

embodiment of the will of God. The call of Abraham, the patriarchal lives spent in direct fellowship with that heaven, the bitter Egyptian captivity which still kept the people apart among the nations, were all steps in the providential order; but chief among all such influences was the giving of the Law. This was at once Israel's distinction, and the basis of its national life. "What nation is then so great, that hath statutes and judgments, so righteous as all this law?" "I gave them my statutes, and shewed them my judgments, which, if a man do, he shall even live in them." "Thou camest down upon Mount Sinai, and spakest with them from heaven, and gavest them right judgments and true laws, good statutes and commandments." "He shewed his word unto Jacob, his statutes and his judgments unto Israel—*He hath not dealt so with any nation.*"*

This national life of Israel, we may remark in passing, is itself a weighty attestation to the authenticity of the documents which contain its charter. Those who maintain the later origin of the Law as a whole, or of Deuteronomy in particular, at least reject the most intelligible account of the existence and history of Israel. With the Law as the grand antecedent, the subsequent history is all explained; take away the former, and the latter becomes darkness and chaos.† The difficulties in the way of receiving the Pentateuch must be far greater than have ever yet be shown, to

* Deut. iv. 8; Ezek. xx. 11; Neh. ix. 13, 14; Ps. cxlvii. 19;

† See "the Pentateuch and its Assailants," by the late Isaac Taylor.

compel us to a theory which at once renders inexplicable the history of a thousand years.

But turning again to the plainly declared Divine purpose, we may remark that it throws light on many things in the Mosaic Law which would otherwise appear strange, even immoral, if judged by the higher law of Christianity. The nation, be it remembered, must above all things be kept apart. International friendship was a thing forbidden, alliances were to be shunned: "thou shalt love thy neighbour and hate thine enemy," was hardly too strong a reproduction of the spirit of the whole. Every institute tended to deepen and widen the separation; that Israel might remain unpolluted, a "holy" or a separate people. With regard again to other statutes, let it be borne in mind, that all wise legislation must be adapted to the people to whom the law is given; meeting them, as it were, on their own level, and so raising them to higher things. Thus, if slavery and polygamy are recognised, it was but because "the hardness" of the people's "hearts"* would not as yet apprehend a law of perfect purity and charity; and the mitigation of the evil of such institutions would best prepare the way for their entire abolition.†

* See Matt. xix. 8.

† The words in Ezekiel xx. 25, "I gave them statutes that were not good, and judgments whereby they should not live," do not refer to the Mosaic Law, but to the Divine dealings with Israel at different stages of the nation's history, permitting the people to follow their own devices, and even sanctioning them by authority. See Micah vi. 16, "the statutes of Omri;" and for the sentiment, compare Psalm lxxxi. 12; Hosea viii. 11; Rom. i. 24; 2 Thess. ii. 11.

II. Another characteristic distinction of the law is it was typical "of good things to come," a shadow "cast before" by a coming Divine reality,—an outline destined to be filled up in every part by living grace and power. Hence the care for the outward form. We are prone to read with amazement long chapters devoted to heavenly revelations respecting pillars and curtains, loops and "taches," the minutiæ of priestly dress, or the ceremonials of a burnt offering. It is when we know that in all these things there were symbols of spiritual truth, that we understand their value to Israel. It was necessary that the picture should be drawn with lines distinct, and with reiterated touch, because it is a picture. The spiritual truth needs no such laboured details; a hint, a living word suffices. In the Gospel we pass from rules to principles and the New Testament has no Leviticus. The difference is that between architecture and life. Of a building, every inch is planned, every stone and "pin" is carefully put in place, while *life*, acting from within, rears its own structure, "we know not how."

On the whole, while we trace the various purposes which the law was intended to subserve in the Divine preparation for the world's redemption, we understand also the meaning of His words who said, "I am not come to destroy but to fulfil."

The fulfilment of the Law as a *moral rule* is by perfect obedience. Christ came to reveal the righteousness of God in a human life, and this was His pure and acceptable offering to God for us.

His fulfilment of the Law, as the *groundwork of a*

kingdom, was first by entrance into that kingdom, and obedience to its statutes, while at the same time He opened the wider, the spiritual kingdom, the true antitype of the Jewish State, in the Christian church, which is eventually to become co-extensive with the world.

His fulfilment of the Law as a body of *ordinances and typical institutions*, was by presenting Himself as the great corresponding reality: the true Paschal Lamb, the Anointed Priest, the Accepted Sacrifice, the Mercy-seat. On this, see the last chapter of the present work, "Christ the substance of the Bible."

Lastly, the fulfilment of the Law *does not destroy*. Christ has given the Law back to the world, with new meaning and added power. No more from motives of hope or fear does the redeemed spirit seek to obey, but because obedience is the Law of its new life, henceforth and for ever. "Do we make void the Law through faith? God forbid; yea, we establish the law." *

* Roman iii. 31. See also chapter vi. 11—18; viii. 2—4; Gal. iii. 19, 20; Eph. ii. 10, and many other passages.

CHAPTER V.

THE WORD OF PROPHECY.

RE-EMINENTLY, the Scriptures are a word of prophecy. It is the declaration of Christ, that "all the prophets and the law prophesied." There are no questions relating to Biblical interpretation at once more important, more interesting, and more difficult than those which relate to the scope and application of the prophetic writings. Perhaps, again, there are no topics on which the conclusions of thoughtful students are at present* more diverse. In indicating our own conclusions, while we can attempt but the briefest outline of the subject, we ask to be read with attention and candour; referring for more copious details to the works of Davison, Fairbairn, Professor Payne Smith, and especially to the sermons of Dr. Arnold.†

* *At present*: as there are hopeful signs of better accordance on general principles, at least among those who admit a predictive element in Scripture at all.

† "Discourses on Prophecy," the Warburton Lecture, by J. Davison, B.D. Seventh Edition, 1861.

"Prophecy viewed in its distinctive nature, its special functions, and proper interpretation," by Patrick Fairbairn, D.D. Second edition.

"Prophecy, a Witness to Christ," by R. Payne Smith, the Bampton Lecture for 1868.

"Two Sermons on the Interpretation of Prophecy, preached in the Chapel of Rugby School." With notes, by Thos. Arnold, D.D. Second Edition, 1844.

First of all, it must be borne in mind that the word prophecy has two distinct meanings. In plain Saxon, it is either *fore-telling*, or *forth-telling*. The latter signification is by far the more common of the two. In Israel, the expositors of the will of God in any way were generally termed prophets. Thus Abraham is described as "a prophet" by Abimelech of Gerar, Gen. xx. 7. In Psalm cv. 15, where reference seems made to this passage, the term "prophets" is applied to the patriarchs generally, as the chosen depositaries of the divine will. Aaron is said (Exod. vii. 1) to be the "prophet" of Moses, *i.e.*, his spokesman. Of Moses himself it is declared (Deut. xxxiv. 10) that there arose not "a prophet" in Israel like unto him—not because of his predictions, but because of his manifold and inspired declarations of the divine will. So Samuel (1 Samuel, iii. 20) "was established to be a prophet of the Lord," although the foretelling of future events formed but a small part of his ministry. The "schools of the prophets," which Samuel instituted, were for the training of *religious teachers* in the most general sense. It was even part of the prophetic function to compose and to sing hymns of praise to God. David, "separated to the service of the sons of Asaph, and of Heman, and of Jeduthun, who should *prophesy* with harps, with psalteries, and with cymbals," 1 Chron. xxv. 1; see also 1 Sam. x. 5.* In more than one ancient language the word for "poet" and "prophet" is the

* "Him serve with mirth, His praise *forth-tell*. Come ye before Him, and rejoice,"—Psalm c. Sternhold and Hopkins.

same; a fact which explains the phrase of the apostle Paul in Titus i. 12, "A prophet of their own said, The Cretans are alway liars," &c.

The distinction between the terms "prophet" and "seer" (1 Sam. ix. 9; 1 Chron. xxix. 29, &c.) appears to be that the latter refers more especially to the *insight*, the former to the *utterances* of the servants of God. In relation to God they are seers; in relation to men prophets. They behold the truth, and they tell it forth. No one can read the narratives in which prophets appear, or the books which bear their names, without perceiving that by far the larger part of their teaching had reference to *present* duty and obligation. In a word, they were the religious instructors of the people; and it was but occasionally, in their moments of loftiest inspiration, that the future loomed, in its vastness of terror or of glory, before their vision.

Similar remarks are even more emphatically true of New Testament times. In the enumeration of gifts and offices in the early churches, that of prophecy almost exactly corresponds to our preaching. See 1 Cor. xii. 10; xiii. 2; xiv. throughout; Ephes. iv. 11, &c. Hence the wider use of the term in our own language. Bishop Jeremy Taylor's great work on the "Liberty of *Prophesying*" refers to the whole subject of religious teaching. Lord Bacon speaks, in one of his works, of "an exercise commonly called 'prophesying,' which was this: that the ministers within a precinct did meet upon a week-day in some principal town, where there was some ancient grave minister that was president, and an auditory admitted of gentlemen or other persons

of leisure. Then every minister successively, beginning with the youngest, did handle one and the same part of Scripture, spending severally some quarter of an hour or better, and in the whole some two hours. And so, the exercise being begun and concluded with prayer, and the president giving a text for the next meeting, the assembly was dissolved.*

When, however, it is said, as it has been said of late in England as well as in Germany, that Scripture knows no other kind of prophecy than this, that there are no distinct examples of supernatural prediction, and that the passages which appear in the ordinary sense prophetic are either texts misunderstood, or passages written after the event, or merely human surmises according to the laws of probability, it becomes necessary to examine and to vindicate the old belief. It seems strange, with such a passage before us, for instance, as Deut. xviii. 22, to deny that Scripture prophecy claims to be often distinctly predictive. "If the thing follow not, . . . the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously." So Jeremiah xxviii. 9, "When the word of the prophet shall come to pass, then shall the prophet be known, that the Lord hath truly sent him." But it is in the wonderful poem which constitutes the second part of the book of Isaiah (chap. xl.—lxvi.) that the question is brought to a distinct issue. Again and again is the challenge

* See further, "Biblical Dictionary," art. PROPHET, by the Rev. F. Meyrick; also Dr. M'Caul's essay on the subject in "Aids to Faith."

given to all idols and idol-worshippers, "The things that are coming, and shall come, let them show!" See xli. 22; xliv. 7—21; xlvii. 11—15, &c. On the contrary, JEHOVAH asserts His own prerogative—"declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done," xlvi. 10; see also xlvii, 5.

The witness of the New Testament to the predictive character of Old Testament prophecy is equally distinct. In the very first chapter of Matthew, the birth of Christ is stated to have taken place as it did, "that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet." "This means," says Mr. Meyrick, "that the prophecy was the declaration of God's purpose, and that the circumstances of the birth of Christ were the fulfilment of that purpose. Then either the predictive element exists in the book of the prophet Isaiah, or the authority of the evangelist St. Matthew must be given up."

But to multiply quotations and proofs on a matter so plain is needless. Every recurrence of the New Testament phrase, "that it might be fulfilled," is a proof that in the view of evangelists, of apostles, of our Lord himself (see Matt. xiii. 14; xv. 7), it was a part of the prophetic commission to declare things to come.*

The difficulty of the subject arises when we come

* Isaiah is quoted in the New Testament between fifty and sixty times; the Psalms no fewer than seventy. Among other quotations are passages from Jeremiah (Matt. ii. 18; Heb. viii. 8), Daniel (Matt. xxiv. 15), Hosea (Matt. ii. 15; Rom. ix. 25), Joel (Acts ii. 17), Amos (Acts vii. 42; xv. 16),

to examine the several prophecies and their fulfilment in detail. Here it is, above all, necessary to have a firm hold on right principles, or confusion will be endless.

The predictions of the Old Testament may be divided into three classes:—

1. Those of which the fulfilment was immediate or speedy, so serving as a proof of the prophet's divine commission. Such prophecies were those of the destruction of Sennacherib before Jerusalem (Isaiah xxxvii.), and of the death of Shallum, son of Josiah (Jer. xxii. 11, 12). Another remarkable instance is the prophecy of Ezekiel, that Zedekiah shall be brought "to Babylon, to the land of the Chaldeans; yet shall he *not see it*, though he shall die there" (Ezek. xii. 13), the fact being that Zedekiah was blinded before being carried into captivity. Of a similar kind may have been the great mass of predictions uttered by the prophets who have left no writings. Their words belonged to their own age, and so served their purpose. See 1 Kings xxii. 5—28.

2. Another class of *specific* predictions related to the future—often to the very distant future.

To this class belong the prophecy of Noah with respect to Canaan, Shem, and Japheth (Gen ix. 25—

Jonah (Matt. xii. 40), Micah (Matt. xii. 7), Habakkuk (Acts xiii. 41), Haggai (Heb. xii. 26), Zechariah (Matt. xxi. 5; Mark xiv. 27; John xix. 37), Malachi (Matt. xi. 10; Mark i. 2; Luke vii. 27). Ezekiel is almost repeated in several passages of the Apocalypse. There is probably no New Testament quotation from Obadiah, Zephaniah, or Nahum.

27); the description of Ishmael and his descendants (xvi. 12); the dying words of Jacob (xlix.); the predictions of Balaam when under the control of a power mightier than his own (Numb. xxiv.); the foreshadowing of the calamities that would punish Israel's disobedience (Deut. xxviii. 49—57); the last words of Moses (xxxiii.); and, in the prophetic books, the Babylonian captivity and return (Isa. xxxix., &c.); the overthrow of Edom (Jer. xlix. 17—22; Isa. xxxiv. 10); of Babylon, mentioning Cyrus the conqueror by name (Isa. xliv., xlv.); of Nineveh (Nahum, Zephaniah); of Tyre (Ezek. xxviii.); and of Egypt (Jer. xlvi).

Under the same head must be placed many of the prophecies referring to the advent and work of the SAVIOUR. Exclusive of such predictions as will be noticed under the next head, the Old Testament scriptures distinctly and explicitly declare that the great Deliverer should arise from the seed of Abraham (Gen. xii. 3); from Isaac, out of Abraham's children (xxii. 18); from Jacob, out of Isaac's (xxviii. 14); from Judah, out of Jacob's (xlix. 10); and from David, out of the descendants of Judah (Jer. xxiii. 5). The era of His coming is specified (Gen. xlix., 10; Dan. ix. 24, 26); also the place of His birth (Mic. v. 2); the scene of His most prolonged ministry (Isa. ix. 1, 2); His miracles (xxxv. 5, 6), sufferings and death (Psa. xxii.; Isa. liii.; Dan. ix. 26), His resurrection, exaltation, and kingdom (Psa. lxviii. 18; cx. 2; Isa. liii. 10—12); the gift of the Holy Spirit (Joel ii. 28); the ingathering of the Gentiles (Isa. xlix. 6, 7). Observe, the evidence here is *cumulative*. It rests not

upon single prophecies, however clear and striking. Some of the predictions cited may possibly be referable to the next class. In individual cases, also, the fulfilment might plausibly be explained as that of many secular "prophecies" has been, by mere coincidence, or by the speaker's far-seeing, sagacious, but natural wisdom. When, however, we have a host of passages, scattered all through the Old Testament, tending in one direction, and meeting in one life, it must be clear to every candid mind that divine foreknowledge is there.

3. We come now to a third class of predictions, viz., those which evidently had an immediate fulfilment, and yet as clearly pointed onward to a remoter time. Here we meet the often discussed and difficult question of the "double sense" of prophecy.

It has sometimes too rashly been set down as an unsatisfactory, if not an absurd belief, that a prophecy should have two or more separate fulfilments. "Is not this," it has been asked, "to exchange the simplicity of Scripture for the ambiguity of heathen oracles?"

We reply by stating what this "double sense" really means. Starting from the principle that God has one great purpose in the world's government, and that this purpose is one of redemption through His Son, we hold that not only the *words* which were spoken in ancient time, but the *events* of the divine providential government, were arranged with a view to the future consummation. History itself was typical. In the Jewish kingdom, especially, the whole story of

trial, sorrow, deliverance, and triumph was in designed correspondence with the crises and the conflicts of the spiritual kingdom yet to come. Hence the prophet, in speaking of the outward and the immediate state of things, is continually led to exhibit the antitype. Sometimes the same words prefigure both; sometimes the prophet passes, as by unconscious transition, from one to the other. While speaking of the literal Israel, or the vicissitudes of the earthly kingdom, he rises to a loftier tone, his images become vaster and more magnificent, the chosen nation vanishes, as in a dissolving view, into the form of the Son of God, or into the vision of the church redeemed. Thus "no prophecy of Scripture is of any private" or *exclusive* "interpretation;" while its meaning was often dark to the seers themselves, "searching what or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify," pointing them onward, though they knew it not, to that

> "One far-off, divine event,
> Toward which the whole creation moves."

We take two or three illustrations of this law. The *first* quoted prophecy in the New Testament, "A virgin" —more properly, "The virgin"—"shall conceive, and bear a son" is from Isa. vii., the candid reader of which passage can scarcely resist the conclusion that the prediction, *in some sense*, belonged to Isaiah's own day. The child was to be born as a sign to Ahaz, and the deliverance of Jerusalem was to be speedy. But in all

this the divine wisdom contemplated a greater, better, redemption.*

The *second* cited prediction (Matt. ii., 5, 6) has been referred to under a former head; the *third*, in the fifteenth verse, declares that the residence in Egypt of the infant Saviour was "that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Out of Egypt have I called my Son," Hos. xi., 1. Now it is certain to every reader of Hosea that the prophet refers in that passage to the historical, literal Israel. Now, then, does the passage become predictive? Entirely by the application of the principle just laid down. The history itself was typical. Israel's filial relation to Jehovah symbolized that of the divine Son, and Egypt, in both cases, was "the cradle of the church."

We only add another passage from the same chapter, —the *fourth* citation in the New Testament. Rachel weeping for her children, and refusing to be comforted assuredly stands, in Jer. xxxi., for the mourning mother, personified as bewailing her children carried away into the Babylonian captivity, the restoration from which is distinctly promised: "They shall come again from the land of the enemy." But the evangelist, seeing Christ in all things, appropriates the words, under Divine direction, to the homes which at His coming were made desolate by a yet sadder blow; and the captive children of Ramah become the type of the infant martyrs of Bethlehem.

The law of which we speak runs through the New

* See any good commentary on the passage, as almost every competent modern expositor concurs in the view above given.

Testament. Another notable illustration is in the epistle to the Hebrews. The writer of the eighth Psalm had spoken of the supremacy of man over the lower creation: "Thou hast put all things under his feet; all sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field; the fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea." In the epistle (ii. 9) these words are distinctly applied to Christ. And why? Undoubtedly because He is the true consummation of our humanity—the one perfect Man; and consequently, that which is spoken of man as such—man in his true *ideal*—finds its deepest meaning and its only complete realisation in Him.

Thus, again, may the earliest of prophecies (Gen. iii., 15) be interpreted—the history of the world in a sentence. Wherever, from righteous Abel downward, the cause of goodness and of truth has come into conflict with the powers of evil, it has been with loss and suffering on the side of the good, followed in the end by triumph. The "seed of the serpent" has wounded the "heel" only to have its own "head" eventually crushed. Such is the long story of mankind, brought to a climax upon the cross; and such shall it be unto the end.

In all that has been said, the subject of unfulfilled prophecy, both in the Old Testament and the New, has been left untouched. The theme has always been a fascinating one to a certain order of minds; but two things seem right to be said in regard to it:—First, that to determine the dates of great coming events is absolutely impossible: "It is not for you to know the times and the seasons, which the Father hath put in his

own power;" and secondly, that analogy shows the great probability of our being wrong in whatever specific conclusions about the future we may form. The prophets had prepared Messiah's way for four thousand years, and yet the church knew not how to look for Him, nor rightly conjectured the manner of His appearing. It is but too probable that the same thing will be repeated. The Apocalyptic interpreters of our day may prove as mistaken as were the Rabbinical interpreters of Isaiah and Ezekiel.* The Spirit of prophecy has provided a sure basis for our faith, but does not furnish details for our curiosity. We know that Christ's kingdom shall come fully, gloriously, in the conquest of every foe and the enthronement of righteousness and love in a regenerated world. But when? How? We cannot tell. For aught we know the answer may be delayed for a thousand generations. Meanwhile let faith, hope, energy abide. The end will come, and prophecy shall then be read in the light of its own fulfilment. "It doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is."

* It is curious to read now (September, 1870,) a book which some years ago excited considerable attention: "Louis Napoleon the predicted Monarch of the World."

CHAPTER VI.

CHRIST'S WITNESS TO OLD TESTAMENT SCRIPTURE.

THERE are three possible answers, and only three, to the question, On what authority may we be assured that the Scriptures are from God?

The first is the answer of the Papist—"We accept the truth on the assurance of the Church."

The second is that of the devout Protestant—"We receive it on the word of a divine Saviour."

The third is that of many Rationalists—"We believe it on the authority of our intuitional Consciousness. Our own hearts tell us what is divinely true."

2. To discuss these answers would be foreign to our present purpose. With regard to the first, it is enough now to say, that to prove it two things would be requisite. First, there must be shown a satisfactory Divine warrant conveying such a prerogative "to the church;" and secondly, the community making it must prove itself to be the church intended. In both respects we regard the failure of proof as signal. We are therefore thrown upon other authority. Nor need we lament that an element of uncertainty is thus introduced, as, after all, the church, in the supposed case, would have

to rest its decision on evidence, which, as we shall show, is attainable by all inquiring Christians.

Again, the third, or Rationalist's answer to the question, is at once open to the objection that it makes each man's reason the measure of the Divine. No doubt the testimony of experience is of all evidence the most assuring to a believer; but its value is in supporting the *truth*, rather than in establishing the Divine claim of the *record*. Trust to this argument, chiefly or alone, and it will be difficult to say why many parts of Scripture should not be rejected. "Such and such a passage," it might then be said, "does not come with power to my mind and heart, it does not *find* me (to use an expression of Coleridge) and I am not, therefore bound to receive it." In a word, while giving all weight to the heart's own witness, we maintain that a further assurance is needed, external to the man himself.

Such assurance is to be found, according to the second answer, in the testimony of Christ.

3. The point is of such high importance that one simple illustration may be added. I take a passage of Old Testament history or poetry, say the Book of Esther or the Song of Solomon. How am I to be sure that it is "given by inspiration of God?" I decline to admit the fact on the authority of the Church of Rome, or even on the testimony of the Church of England. My own reason and conscience, again, may not bear decisive witness to the divinity of this portion of the Bible. I may feel that my faith in the Redeemer and my acceptance of His salvation

would be complete without it. Where, then, am I to look to decide the difficulty? The answer is, to the attestation which Christ gave to the Book *as a whole*, inclusive of the portion in question. The argument, of course, is stronger in the case of passages which He specifically quotes; but we have purposely taken two books to which no direct reference seems made in any part of the New Testament.

4. The argument, then, drawn out in detail, stands thus:—

First. CHRIST possesses divine authority; as proved on other grounds, supported by historical evidence, &c.

Secondly. His words invest the ancient Scriptures with this authority throughout.

Thirdly. The books of Esther and Canticles belong to these ancient Scriptures. This is a question of *fact*, on which the Jews and the "Fathers," in their respective writings, as well as the ancient churches in their councils, synods, and other proceedings, may be admitted to bear witness.

Therefore, fourthly, these two books are among the Scriptures which are divinely inspired.

It is to the *second* of the above points that we have more particularly to attend.* The Scriptures as a

* The *first*, however, has in our day been directly impugned, at least, so far as our Lord's testimony to Scripture is concerned. Bishop Colenso, for example, denies that *on this point* —the authenticity and divinity of the Old Testament Scriptures—the Saviour spoke with infallible authority. These matters of "criticism" may not have been among those revealed to His human understanding; He may have "accom-

whole—the Scriptures as received by the Jews—were accepted and honoured by Christ as divine.

The chief illustrations of this statement may be classed under two heads.

5 First, our Lord makes many *general* references to the Scriptures, in such a way as to authenticate their divinity.

We may here repeat the well-known fact, that the Bible, as it existed among the Jews, was divided into three parts—the "Law," the "Prophets," and the Hagiographa," or "Holy Writings;" which last section was also denominated, from its leading book, the "Psalms." Sometimes the whole was called "the Law and the Prophets;" sometimes, again, "the Law." Now the Saviour enstamps the Scripture with His authority under all these varied appellations. After His resurrection He declared, "All things must be fulfilled, which were written in the Law of Moses, and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning me" (Luke xxiv. 44); *i. e.*, "in the whole of the Old Testament." Again, in Matt. v. 17, vii. 12, xi. 13, xxii. 40; Luke

modated" His words to the notions of the people, &c. That is, in plain language, our divine Lord either did not know what was the truth on this subject, or He encouraged the people in a delusion. Either supposition is shocking. The Bishop makes a sophistical use of the terms "critical" and "criticism," as if the question respecting the ancient Scriptures were nothing more,—one, in fact, to be ranked with matters of physical science and the like, on which our Lord's adopting popular language could have led to no misconception. The subject is one not of criticism only, but concerns the very essence of religion.

xvi. 16, 29, the shorter phrase, "the Law and the Prophets," is as evidently used by Christ of the entire volume,* while He thrice employs the term "Law" for the Scriptures generally; Luke xvi. 17, John x. 34, and xv. 25. In Mark xiv. 49 and John v. 39, our Lord employs the wider term, "the Scriptures;" also in Matt. xxi. 42, in the citation of a particular text; while in Mark xii. 10, Luke iv. 21, John vii. 38, x. 35, the singular, "Scripture," is used by Him of an individual passage.† Every title, then, by which the collective writings of the Old Testament was known, was by turns employed by Him, as if to show that He accepted it in every aspect as divine. It is very remarkable that He uses exactly the same phrase to denote the permanence and power of the ancient word and of His own. For while we read in Matt. v. 18, Luke xvi. 17, that it is easier for "heaven and earth to pass away" than for aught of THE LAW to fail, He declares (Matt. xxiv. 35; Mark xiii. 31; Luke xxi. 33), "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but MY WORD shall not pass away." The Words of the ancient covenant, therefore, to their every "jot and tittle," are invested with the same authority as the words of Christ.

* Compare Acts xiii. 15; xxvi. 22, xviii. 23.

† The difference between "Scriptures" and "Scripture" is, that while the former title stands for the whole of the sacred volume, the latter "is always used for a special passage, and not, as at present, both for the part and for the whole" (Westcott, "The Bible in the Church," p. 4). See also Mark xv. 28; John ii. 22; vii. 42; xix. 37; xx. 9; Acts i. 16; viii. 32, 35; Rom. iv. 3; James ii. 8, &c.

6. Secondly, our Lord quotes special passages of the Old Testament, always as an ultimate authority, admitting of no appeal.

i. Thus, in the temptation in the wilderness, He repels every assault of Satan by a text of Scripture. "Man shall not live by bread alone;" "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God;" "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve." Matt. iv. 4, 7, 10; Luke iv. 4, 8, 12. He who was Himself the living Word of God did not disdain to resort to the ancient armoury; honouring the Bible thus, in one of the most solemn moments of His life, that we might learn to honour it too.

ii. When, in His early village home of Nazareth, He entered the synagogue whither His youthful steps had often eagerly bent their way, and before His wondering fellow-villagers opened His commission from on high, it was from the ancient prophecy that He took His text. "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me; because the Lord God hath anointed me to preach the Gospel to the meek," &c., Luke iv. 16—21.

iii. The Sermon on the Mount is full of Scripture quotations, direct and indirect. Every beatitude, except the last, has its clear Old Testament parallel.* And if in the succeeding parts of that divine discourse

* Matt. v. 1—9. For the beatitude on the *poor in spirit*, compare Isa. lvii, 15; lxvi. 2; for that on *mourners*, Isa. lxi. 3; for that on *the meek*, Psa. xxxvii. 11; for that on the *hungering* and *thirsting for righteousness*, Isa. lv. 2; for that on the *merciful*, Psa. xli. 1, 2; for that on the *pure in heart*, Psa. xxiv. 3, 4; and for that on *peace-makers*, Psa. xxxiv. 14.

there seems some exception taken to Old Testament *rules*, it is but that Old Testament *principles* may receive a higher development and illustration. On this mountain also, as on the Mount of Transfiguration, "Moses and Elias," the Law and the Prophets, are brought into the presence of the Beloved Son, and transfigured with His glory.

iv. In reproving the bigotry and unbelief of the Jewish people, the Saviour continually quotes to them their Scriptures as of divine authority. "Ye search the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life; and they are they which testify of me, and ye will not come to me that ye might have life" (John v. 39). Such is Christ's argument (equally cogent, though obscured, in the common version, which gives the first clause as a command: "Search the Scriptures," &c.) In this tone the reproofs of our Lord were continually couched. "Well did Esaias prophesy of you!"—"Had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me."—"Is it not written in your Law?—and the Scripture cannot be broken." Compare Matt. xv. 8, with Isa. xxix. 13; Mark vii. 10 with Exod. xx. 12; Lev. xx. 9, John x. 34—36, with Psa. lxxxii. 6; Mark xi. 17, with Isa. lvi. 7. Again, Psa. cxviii. 22, finds its illustration in Matt. xxi. 42, and Psa. viii. 2 in Matt. xxi. 16.

v. By similar citations He sustains those parts of His teaching which we are accustomed to regard as most distinctively evangelical. Does He, for instance, promulgate His own highest rule of morality? He takes it verbally and literally from the law; for in Deut. vi. 5, we read, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy

God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might;" while in Lev. xix. 18, it is written, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." Does he assert the sacredness of domestic ties? He appeals, as in Matt. xix. 4—6, to the olden historical record of man's creation, "male and female," Gen. i. 27, ii. 24, expressly quoting the latter passage. Does he vindicate the spirituality of religion as against all reliance upon ceremony? He bids the Pharisees to "go and learn what this meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice," quoting from Hos. vi. 6. See Matt. ix. 13; xii. 7. Nay, He places the distinctive doctrine of the gospel which has "brought life and incorruption to light"—the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead—on a sure Old Testament basis. "The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob," "is not the God of the dead, but of the living,"—Matt. xxii. 23—32; Mark xii. 18—27; Luke xx. 27—38.

vi. In the last hours of life He still refers to the Scriptures as premonitory of all His sorrow and triumph. "All ye shall be offended because of me this night: for it is written [Zech. xiii. 7], I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad" (Matt. xxvi. 31). Of His betrayal He speaks as prefigured in Scripture (John xiii. 18, as compared with Psalm xli. 9), making a similar reference even in His great intercessory prayer (John xvii. 12; Psalm cix. 8). His mysterious cry of agony from the cross—"Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani"—is a quotation from the first verse of the twenty-second Psalm; and we are assured by one evangelist that the

dying Christ exclaimed, "I thirst," to bring about a fulfilment—the *last*—of those scriptures which referred to His sufferings (John xix. 28; Psalm lxix. 21). Then, "when Jesus had received the vinegar, He said, IT IS FINISHED: and He bowed His head, and gave up the ghost;" still quoting Scripture with His last breath, "Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit" (Luke xxiii. 46; Psalm xxxi. 5).

vii. The crown and climax of all this was when on His resurrection day He veiled Himself awhile, that the Scriptures, expounded by His own lips, might testify of Him (Luke xxiv. 25—27). The incarnate Word for a little while gave place to the written word. "*Ought not* the Christ to have suffered all these things, and to enter into His glory?" was an appeal to Scripture authority; and the hearts of the two disciples burned within them while, from "Moses and all the prophets, He expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself." To the last, He maintained the same appeal; and in His final recorded discourse, before He led His disciples forth to Bethany, and parted from them in benediction, "He opened their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures, and said unto them, Thus it is written" (verses 45, 46).

viii. Thus manifold and complete is the attestation of the Redeemer to the Scriptures of the Old Testament. The New, as we shall subsequently see, rests also upon His authority, but in a somewhat different way. We only add that in such words as have been quoted there is both *evidence* and *example*.

(1.) There is evidence. In face of all the passages here given, and of the parallel declarations, it is vain for the assailant of the Old Testament to allege that Christ spoke merely according to the prepossessions of His age, or in "accommodation" to the prejudices of the Jews. Plainly, His own authority stands or falls by the authority of "the Scriptures." If we believe Him, we must accept them. Nay, He has Himself declared this in words already quoted, and admitting of no evasion. "If ye believe not his [Moses'] writings, how shall ye believe my words?" The verse (John v. 47) might be taken as prophetic of some controversies in these latter days.

(2.) There is example. If Christ takes His stand upon Scripture, ever and anon enforcing His own divine words by an "It is written," what should be our reverence! Men talk of "Bibliolatry" with scorn. We hardly understand them. The book we assuredly do not worship; but, like the divine Son, the Elder Brother of our humanity, we discern it in the Father's voice. Our honour to the Bible, therefore, is an act of filial homage; and when we pay our deepest reverence to its truths and teachings, we do but obey the commandment, "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve."

CHAPTER VII.

THE NEW TESTAMENT SCRIPTURES.

IT is an obvious remark, that by "the Scriptures" our Lord and His Apostles intend the Scriptures of the Old Testament. *These*, then, are "able to make wise unto salvation." The revelation given by "Moses and the Prophets" is set forth in one of our Lord's most impressive parables, as sufficient to save. The "word spoken to the fathers," interpreted by the living voice of the apostles and early preachers of the truth, was rightly held to contain the very essence of the Gospel. "The Old Testament," writes Professor Westcott, "was the Bible of the apostolic church."

1. But there are traces in the later Epistles, that a new series of writings had already begun to be recognised, possessing a like authority. The most remarkable passage bearing on the point is 2 Peter iii. 15, 16, "Even as our beloved brother Paul also, according to the wisdom given unto him, hath written unto you; as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which (epistles) are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, *as they do also the other Scriptures*, unto their own destruction." Here, therefore, some of the

letters of Paul are plainly classed among "the Scriptures." To enquire which of them are so designated would be more curious than useful. As the topic in hand is the coming of the "day of the Lord," those Epistles in which reference is made to this event—those, for instance, to the Thessalonians—must have been more particularly intended; but, be this as it may, the Pauline writings, in whole or in part, are evidently taken into the category of Scripture. The ancient oracles are already supplemented, and the primitive church acknowledges the divine inspiration of the apostolic words.

2 It cannot, however, be questioned that the new revelation existed chiefly in an oral form. The circulation of the Epistles was of necessity partial and limited. These writings were themselves occasional, prompted by external circumstances; although teaching truth of universal application. From the first, indeed, their authors wrote, as conscious of divine inspiration, "I charge you," says the Apostle Paul, at the end of his earliest Epistle, "that this epistle be read unto all the holy brethren." 1 Thess. v. 27.

The true foundation, however, of the New Testament was the narrative of our Lord's earthly life, with His death and resurrection. In what form the sacred story first was told we cannot tell. Or, if we might conjecture, we would turn to the Apostle Peter's discourse in the house of Cornelius, as recorded Acts x. 36—43. Here we have the New Testament in the germ; at once the narrative and the doctrine; the facts and the application; the outline in a few firm strokes,

which others were filling up by tongue or pen. "Many," says the evangelist Luke, at the beginning of his record, "have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us." These narratives, more or less exact and complete, were gradually absorbed in the four great apostolic histories of *Matthew*, *Peter*, *Paul*, and *John*. For early tradition assures us that Mark was companion and interpreter to Peter, while the surer testimony of Scripture itself proves Luke to have been an associate of Paul. The name of *Gospel*, pre-eminently, was given from very early times to each of these histories. Thus Theodoret, the ecclesiastical historian, who died A.D. 457, speaks of the "quaternion of the Holy Gospel." Gregory of Nyssa (died 396) denominates the narrative of John "the lofty," or sublime "Gospel," on account of the high matters of which it treats; and Chrysostom (died 407) speaks of "the chariot of the Gospels, drawn by four living creatures."

This appellation is most significant. It need not be stated that Gospel in the New Testament always bears another sense; referring to the substance of the glad tidings, the truth proclaimed, sometimes to the action and course of those who proclaimed it (see Phil. iv. 15), never to any written record.* From the first, however,

* Some critics would make an exception to this statement, in 2 Cor. viii. 18. "We have sent with him the brother, whose praise is in the Gospel throughout all the churches." By some, this messenger is supposed to have been Luke, the reference being to his written Gospel. But, in the first place, there is

it was felt that the true life and power of the message lay in the revelation of GOD IN CHRIST:—a divine life, a sacrificial death, followed by exaltation to the life above. To tell of this was to preach the Gospel, and soon the books that related the history were called gospels also. No form of speech could more clearly set forth the conviction of the early church that the revelation is essentially *historical:*—not a mere doctrinal system, nor a philosophy, nor a code, but a LIFE. The doctrine of necessity follows; apostles interpret what evangelists record; the meaning of the story is unfolded in the lofty arguments of the Epistles, but their highest task is to lead the reader back to the history, that he may reach the depths of its wondrous meaning. Where the child begins the theologian ends; and the greatest achievement of Paul, or Peter, or John, is to lead us back to the Master, that in Him we may more clearly discern the Way, and the Truth, and the Life. So also, as the "Apostles' Creed," so called (though wrongly), first took shape in the early churches, it was mainly occupied with the facts of the divine biography. Doctrines were but the elucidations of these facts; and the true theology of Christians was seen to be a Christology.

3 The New Testament is then a divine history with an apostolic interpretation. In the language of the

really no ground, save mere conjecture, for supposing Luke to be intended, and, secondly, the phrase "in the Gospel" is elsewhere used in Paul's Epistles, for "the promulgation of the Gospel." See Rom. i. 9. 2 Cor. x. 14 (where *preaching* is not in the original) Phil. ii. 22. 1 Thess. iii. 2.

early churches it was termed, collectively, "the Gospels and the Apostles," as the Old Testament writings were "the Law and the Prophets."*

That the twenty-seven Books which we now accept as divine, were so accepted from primitive times, is shown by an uninterrupted series of quotations by Christian writers, as well as by very ancient catalogues. It is true, that *all* the books were not always received, nor by all; the Epistle to the Hebrews, the Second Epistle of Peter, the Second and Third of John, the Epistle of Jude, and the Book of Revelation, being by some questioned or rejected. The opposition, however, to these sooner or later died away; and by the end of the fourth century, an assent practically universal had been obtained. This happy settlement of the greatest question in the literature of the world was not due to any "General Council," as sometimes thought, nor to any so-called infallible decree; it was the consent of the churches, gradually attained, resting on intelligent conviction, and immeasurably the more valuable for the foregoing doubts. The conviction, it is true, found signal utterance in one synod especially—that of Carthage, A D. 397, of which Augustine, the greatest of "the Fathers" was the ruling spirit. The decree however, which is sometimes said to have fixed the New Testament Canon† was only an explicit utter-

* Prof. Gaussen.

† "Canon," Greek, a *line* or *measure*, is used in two senses; sometimes as a rule *of conduct;* the Scriptures being so termed as giving the standard of right action; sometimes as the rule which *defines the inspired writings.* In the former sense

ance of the belief that had grown up within the church, and derived all its authority from its expressing a deep and universal conviction.*

Thus, then, we have the NEW TESTAMENT, in its formation the growth of a single age, † in its reception the work of the Spirit of God, acting on the minds and hearts of Christians through many generations, and still giving testimony to the word of His grace.

But wherefore was it called the *New Testament?* The word Testament signifies "Covenant," sometimes passing into the sense of "Law" or "dispensation." As covenants were ratified by the immolation of victims, the sacrifices under the Law were spoken of as "the blood of the Covenant," Exodus xxiv. 8; see also Zechariah ix. 11. Hence our Lord said to the disciples at the Last Supper, "This is my blood of the New Covenant," Matt. xxvi. 28. Hence, in the Epistle

Scripture is canonical, *i. e.*, regulative of the life and conduct: in the latter, we speak of the canonical Scriptures. *i. e.*, the books which the canon declares to be inspired. It is to the latter sense that the word is now generally appropriated.

* For details, the reader is referred to Dr. Angus's "Bible Hand-book," to Professor Westcott's "Bible in the Church," and to Dr. Gaussen's "Canon of the Holy Scriptures." The testimonies of "the Fathers," the early catalogues, the quotations, &c., are collected in Lardner, summarized by Paley: and to readers of German, are presented in a most convenient and thorough way by Dr. Kirchhofer, in his Quellensammlung zur Geschichte des Neutestamentlichen Kanons, 1842.

† The New Testament writings were composed between the years 54 and 98, A.D., (Dr Döllinger: "The First Age of the Church.")

to the Hebrews, the Gospel dispensation is termed, in allusion to Jeremiah xxxi. 31, the "New Covenant" of which the prophet had spoken, Heb. viii. 8, 13, while Jesus is termed the Mediator of the "New Covenant," ix. 15; xii. 24. So the Apostle Paul writes, 2 Cor. iii. 6, "Our sufficiency is of God, who hath made us sufficient as ministers of a New Covenant." Then, in the immediate context, "the Old Covenant," so now first called in contrast with the New, is spoken of as "read," pointing thus to the written record. "Until this day remaineth the same veil untaken away in the reading of the Old Covenant." From these passages, there can be no doubt, arose the title bestowed in the churches from the first upon the two divisions of the inspired books; "the Book of the Old Covenant," "the Book of the New," or more briefly, the "Old Covenant," and "the New." It is, perhaps, to be regretted, that the use of the word "Testament" has somewhat obscured, to the ordinary reader, the force of the above-cited passages. Suffice it to say, that in our English Scriptures (with the doubtful exception of one passage*) *Testament* always means *Covenant*, never having its ordinary sense of *Will*. The idea is not that of a treasure bequeathed, but of a *dispensa-*

* Hebrews ix. 16, 17. This difficult passage should probably be rendered as follows:—"For where there is a covenant, the death of the covenanting (*i. e.*, the person who enters into covenant with God, and is represented by the substitutionary victim, Psa. l. 5) is necessarily brought in; for a covenant is valid over the dead (*i. e.*, the slain victims); since it never has force while the covenanting (victim) lives." *See Annotated Paragraph Bible*, in loc.

tion; not precisely "an agreement between contracting parties," after the manner of human covenants, but a delivery of certain blessings and privileges on specified conditions. And the elder covenant the apostle declares "had no glory" in comparison with the excellent glory of the New.

5 In the profound and suggestive passage to which we have referred (2 Cor. iii. 7—18) the glory of the New Covenant is set forth in impressive contrast with that of the Old. The one is a letter, the other a spirit; the one finds expression in law, the other in love; "Thou shalt, thou shalt not," is the language of the one; "obey the dictates of the new life within," is the summons of the other, leaving compliance fearlessly to the free heart of the disciple. The glory of the olden dispensation is likened to the glory on the face of Moses, bright but transient, so "that the children of Israel could not stedfastly look to the end of that vanishing (splendour)" ver. 13. The great lawgiver, therefore, veiled his face (Exodus xxxiv. 33—35), aptly symbolizing the dim and partial view which Israel had of the Divine glory through the veil of outward forms. To this day, it is a custom among the Jews for the reader of the Law in the synagogue to veil his face. A more striking emblem still, the apostle adds, of Israel's spiritual blindness! "For until this very day the same veil remaineth in the reading of the Old Covenant, since its vanishing away in Christ is not unveiled to them, but unto this day, whenever Moses is read, a veil is upon their heart.*" Now, when Moses turned

* Verses 14, 15, Dean Stanley's version.

away from the people, and went in again before the Lord, he took the veil from his face; and so, when the Jew shall turn to Christ, the veil shall be taken away from his heart, and with open face he shall behold the glory of God, not struggling darkly through emblems, but embodied in the divine glory of His well-beloved Son. For the Lord, the divine and saving Christ, is the spirit and highest result of every law, whatever may be its letter"* — "But," the apostle adds, "we all with unveiled faces reflecting as in a mirror, the glory of the Lord, are being changed into the same image from glory to glory, as by the Lord, the Spirit."

"If an illustration be desirable, I would say that the Law was like a book of first lessons, lessons for *children*. The ideas conveyed by such a book are true ideas, and such as must be held by the grown-up man, the primary principles of all knowledge and practice. But these principles are given very nakedly, in but few and narrow relations. There are various illustrations and multitudes of pictures. So was it with the Law. It had truth in it to some extent, but it was truth for babes, not men; and hence, only the elements of divine religion were represented, and these in few and simple connexions, and with abundance of pictorial illustration. The Jewish church was an infant school, in which were taught the beginnings of wisdom, and the same lesson was shouted out day after day, and the walls were covered with gay and gaudy representations

* J. H. Thom.

of all manner of objects; and slow and sensual minds might easily miss the meaning and intent of all, think more of the amusement than the instruction, like the singing better than the sense, and thus convert the means of spiritual improvement into a hindrance instead of a help."

"But Christianity is like a book for men, which assumes many things that children must have in most explicit statement; just touches many that they must have in frequent repetition; omits altogether many that to them are indispensable, and develops many more that to them are incomprehensible. It is more suggestive than explanatory, trusts more to conscience than to argument, and appeals to reason rather than to rule. Its doctrines are principles, not propositions; its institutions are grand outlines, not precise ceremonies; its laws are moral sentiments, not minute directions. It reveals the whole counsel of God, brings out the entire character of the Father in its universal relations as righteousness and love; proclaims a common and complete salvation; discovers the 'riches of grace,' invites all 'without money and without price,' to the participation of its greatest blessings; 'opens the door of faith' wide to the guiltiest and weakest; leaves everything to 'the willing mind;' says the only profiting is in 'a new creature,' the only kingdom of heaven is 'within' us; and thus it 'gives life,' reaches the inner springs of feeling and of action; transforms the soul; does wonders where the superficial might fear it would do nothing; and forms a faith of which orthodoxy is but an outward sign, a

holiness of which morality is but a partial fruit, and a Church deeper and more glorious than all organizations."*

* "Christ the Spirit of Christianity," by the late Rev. A. J. Morris.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE DIVINE GUARDIANSHIP OF THE SCRIPTURES.

ERY significant are the words, twice uttered by Jehovah among the earliest of the ceremonial commandments given to Moses, "Thou shalt put into THE ARK the testimony which I shall give thee."* The present subject is aptly illustrated by this symbol. The record of God's word has ever been in the Ark,—protected as by the shadow of God's own presence, and made the special object of His providential care.

1. The methods adopted in the Hebrew nation for perpetuating the sacred records, were most elaborate and efficient. These methods may be succinctly classed as follows:—

i. The divine ordination that each king should on his accessionmake a copy of the law with his own hand, Deut. xvii. 18—20.

ii. The provision, also divine, for private and public

* Exod. xxv. 16, 21. See also xl. 20; Deut. x. 5; 1 Kings viii. 9; Heb. ix. 4. These passages all refer to the *tables* of the law. That the *book* of the law was deposited in or near the ark we learn from Deut. xxxi. 24—26.

instruction out of the law, Deut. vi. 7—9; xi. 19; Lev. x. 11; Deut. xxx. 10—20.

iii. The institution under Ezra of the Great Synagogue, to which was committed the charge of the sacred text, "the Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms," as collected by him after the captivity. In the 8th chapter of Nehemiah, ver. 4, 7, we have the names of Ezra's attendants and helpers in the task of bringing the Scriptures before the people; and from the 13th verse we may gather "the existence of a body of men acting as councillors under his presidency; and these may have been an assembly of delegates from all provincial synagogues—a synod (to use the terminology of a later time) of the National Church."* Whatever else may be learned of this venerable assembly comes to us through tradition; but there is no reasonable ground for doubting that its function was as above stated, and that from its dissolution arose the later Sanhedrim, or "council," spoken of in the New Testament.

iv. The institution of Synagogues, which appears to date from the days of the captivity, and was universally adopted by the nation after the return, powerfully contributed to the same result. In every town and village throughout the land, and even in heathen cities where Jews were found, there was the synagogue—"the place of assembling," or the smaller proseucha—"the house of prayer," where the law and the prophets were read "every sabbath day" (Luke iv.

* Professor Plumptre, in Smith's "Dictionary of the Bible."

16—20; Acts xiii. 14, 15, 27; xv. 21). "It is hardly possible," says Professor Plumptre, "to over-estimate the influence of the system thus developed. To it we may ascribe the tenacity with which, after the Maccabean struggle, the Jews adhered to the religion of their fathers, and never again relapsed into idolatry. The people were now in no danger of forgetting the law, and the external ordinances that hedged it around. If pilgrimages were still made to Jerusalem at the great feasts, the habitual religion of the Jews in, and yet more out of Palestine, was connected much more intimately with the synagogue than with the temple." Henceforth, then, it became impossible in nature of the things that the sacred writings should be lost.

2. But our subject calls us more particularly to review those great providential interpositions by which God himself overruled the most untoward events for the more secure guardianship and the more satisfactory attestation of His own word.

For instance, we may refer to the disruption of Israel into two kingdoms, and the preservation of the books of Moses, in a form not materially altered, by the Northern division. Our readers will soon appreciate the value of this fact in its bearing on certain controversies of the present day.

In the central vale of Palestine, within the city of Shechem, now called Nablus (a corruption of the Greek name Neapolis, or New-town), there are to be found the humble homes and the little synagogue of what Dean Stanley has called the oldest and the

smallest sect in the world. The *Samaritans* there, as in the days when Jesus "must needs pass through" their land, and talk with the woman at the well, maintain their exclusive claim to be the heritage of God, and worship Him on Mount Gerizim, though before a ruined shrine. One hundred and seventy-one members constitute this little flock, dwelling simply, sadly there, the mark of Moslem and "Christian" scorn. Their most precious possession is a manuscript of the PENTATEUCH, the only Scriptures they acknowledge, which they believe to have been transcribed by the hand of Phinehas, the son of Aaron, and which is assuredly of a most remote antiquity.

Now the question is, How came these Samaritans or their ancestors by the law of Moses? Let our readers review the history of the people, and they must, we think, come to the conclusion that there was no time in Israelitish or Samaritan history when the northern nation would have deigned to receive a Bible at the hands of the south. The hatred between Ephraim and Judah continued so unrelenting, that it is impossible to think of the former as ever accepting from the latter a law professedly divine. Whatever sacred books were to be found in the land of Israel must therefore have been there before the strife began, *i. e.*, before the revolt of the ten tribes. The histories, psalms, prophecies, and other inspired productions of a later day would find no place in the Israelitish and Samaritan Scriptures. Moses would be all in all, and Ezra would be ignored.

Now such is precisely the case. The Bible of the Samaritans ends with Deuteronomy, and no doubt is a transcript of that which the priest from the Assyrian captivity (2 Kings xvii. 27, 28) carried over to Bethel for the instruction of their colonist forefathers. In itself the fact is interesting, but as an answer to the modern assailants of the Mosaic origin of the Pentateuch it is irresistible.

Our readers may not all know that the occurrence related in the twenty-second chapter of the Second Book of Kings, is by many of these writers set forth as giving, in fact, the *origin* of the Pentateuch. In other words, Hilkiah, with the best intentions, committed a literary forgery! He pretended to have "found" what he had really written!

Now we may pass by all moral objections to this strange supposition. We need not insist on the unlikelihood of such deceit having been practised by a good and holy man, nor upon the difficulty of getting the people to believe that a recent composition had been the manual of their country's religion and the charter of its freedom for seven hundred and fifty years, nor upon the impossiblility of accounting for the very existence of the Jewish commonwealth and religion without the law. These arguments, indeed, seem insuperable; but here is a plain matter of fact. If the book came from Hilkiah, it must have passed from the Jews to the Samaritans (for Israel was already in Assyrian exile), and have been palmed off upon them also as the true and venerable record of their own religion. But there is not a period in the whole after

history of the two nations in which this can with any likelihood be believed to have taken place. From first to last, "the Jews had no dealings with the Samaritans." The Samaritan Bible, therefore,—that is, the five books of Moses,—must have been older than Hilkiah, older than the captivity in Assyria, older than Rehoboam. Admit this, and nothing remains but to fix the date of these books at the period they themselves claim, and to believe that, literally and truly, "the Law came by Moses."*

4. Among the later events overruled by Providence for the preservation of the divine word, must be ranked the successive dispersions of the Jews, first throughout Egypt and Africa, and afterwards in all the provinces of the Roman Empire. Hundreds of thousands were thus in successive generations severed from the land of their fathers; and Alexandria in particular became, from the number of its Jewish settlers, almost like a second Jerusalem. The conquests of Alexander the Great and his successors, again, had made the use of

* The reader who desires further details is referred to Mr. Mills's work, "Nablus and the Modern Samaritans," (Murray, 1864) a volume of exceeding interest. Valuable particulars may also be found in Dean Stanley's "Lectures on the Jewish Church," the Biblical Dictionaries, and Mr. Groves's paper on "Vacation Tourists," 1861. It may be added here, that the differences between the Samaritan and Hebrew copies are very numerous, though mostly non-essential. These of course tend to shown the early divergence of the two. It is remarkable that in many instances, it is said two thousand—in which the Samaritan and Hebrew differ, the Septuagint agrees with the former.

the Greek language co-extensive with western civilization. "The whole world" became Greek-speaking; and a translation of the Jewish Scriptures was needful for the Hellenists, or "Grecian" Jews. Hence the *Septuagint*, or Greek version of the Old Testament, executed at different times, we know not how or by whom, at Alexandria. Then came the days of universal Roman ascendancy. One political bond for a little while united the nations that had already, for their highest literature and their mutual intercourse, accepted "one speech." In this crisis it was that JESUS came. The writings of the evangelists and apostles were in the language of the Septuagint: they quote from it, expound it, maintain its authority. As their forerunner, it had prepared the way, and the NEW TESTAMENT at once obtained a currency which could never have been secured at any other epoch before or since in the history of the world.

5. The last paragraph sufficiently explains the immediate diffusion and wide reception of the apostolic writings. These were at first accepted *individually*, some by one section of the church, some by another, according to the primary intent or destination of the several books. Very rapidly, however, the churches arrived at a common understanding with regard to nearly all these writings, until, in the words of Professor Westcott,* "fifty or sixty years after the death of the last apostle, or about a hundred and twenty years

* "The Bible in the Church," p. 120. This work, in size and profession only a manual, but crowded with valuable information, cannot be too earnestly commended.

from the beginning of the apostolic mission, the CHRISTIAN SCRIPTURES were gathered and set apart, and at last combined with those of the Old Testament."

The churches themselves now became the custodians of Scripture; and the preservation of the word of God in its integrity is sufficiently attested both by the lists which early Christian writers have given of the sacred books,* by the innumerable quotations made from them, by the MSS. of the New Testament, dating from the fourth century onwards, which remain to this time, and by the tacit consent of the enemies and perverters of the faith. This last point is very important. That which heretics and infidels united with believers in admitting to form part of the Christian Bible, receives an attestation doubly strong; and some of the grossest errors which ever led the human intellect astray were overruled in the order of divine Providence to the preservation of the Scriptures.

6. The subject would be incomplete without a glance at one special form of mistaken Christianity which was eminently thus overruled. The *monastic system*, based, as we believe it to have been, upon a misapprehension both of human nature and of the Christian religion, served a very important purpose in handing down the Scriptures from generation to generation. In days of universal stir and strife, or through long generations darkness and ignorance, the monastery was the only

* On these topics teachers may read "Gaussen on the Canon;" "The Bible Handbook," by Dr. Angus; and parts of "The Book and its Story."

quiet retreat; and without its walls education was almost unthought of. "In most of the convents and monasteries a room called the *Scriptorium* was set apart for the writing of the Scriptures and of other works. A MS. of the eighth century contains a prayer used at the consecration of such an apartment, that what was written there might take good effect. Sometimes the monks wrote in separate cells, made round the calefactory, which was a contrivance for distributing heat to all. A dozen young men might be seen in such cells writing in perfect silence, for silence was enjoined in the *Scriptorium*, in order to secure accuracy as well as despatch. Many nuns, also, were remarkable for the legible and beautiful character in which they wrote. One is mentioned as having written and ornamented ten missals, besides copying two Bibles, and many writings of the Fathers. Often this labour cost them the early loss of eyesight. Perhaps, during a lifetime, the result of this industry might be forty or fifty folio books."

The Bible was not by any means the only book thus copied: often, indeed, it was quite neglected for some collection of idle legends, or wordy worthless theological disputations. Nay, the manuscript of Scripture was often written over the second time, to save the cost of parchment, with some merely human production! Happily, the ancient ink proved occasionally the more indelible of the two, and the sacred text reappeared as the new writing faded. Manuscripts in which this has occurred are called "palimpsests." One of the most ancient and valuable MSS. of the New Testament is of

this class, the works of one Ephrem, a Syrian poet and theologian, having been written over the divine words. The invention of printing and the Reformation mark together the era which, in its great results, has made the Scriptures a world-wide possession. The latter created the demand, the former the supply. And both, as we may gratefully acknowledge, were of GOD.

7. There is but one other point of view in which we may still illustrate the divine guardianship of the Word. At certain crises in the history of the church the zeal of persecutors has been especially furious against "the sacred books;" and determined efforts have been made to destroy the Scriptures from off the face of the earth. But the martyr spirit of the servants of God has successfully withstood the assault, and the Holy Book has remained undestroyed, unchanged.

A persecution, especially characterized by such onslaught upon the Scriptures, was that against the Jews by Antiochus Epiphanes, about 170 B.C.

"When," we read, "they had rent in pieces the books of the law which they had found, they burnt them with fire. And whosoever was found with any of the books of the testament, or if any consented to the law, the king's commandment was that they should put him to death."*

In like manner, under Diocletian, A.D. 303, the persecution set on foot by Galerius was especially directed against the possessors of the sacred books. The annals of the age are full of noble examples of men and women with whom the retention or resigna-

* 1 Macc. i. 56. 57.

tion of Scripture was made the one test of obedience, and who laid down their lives rather than part with any portion of the word of God. It was this persecution, indeed, that confirmed for ever the attachment of the Church to the Bible, as its most priceless possession. In the Christian community the word "traitor" (traditor) then first became infamous, being applied to those who surrendered the Scriptures to heathen rage; and one of the most notable controversies of the period was on the question whether persons who had committed the crime could *ever* again be restored to the fellowship of the church.

8. Thus by His own wondrous providence, and by the spirit of constancy and faith imparted to His servants, has the God of the Bible protected it, uninjured in its glorious completeness, from age to age. In its *history* as in its *contents*, we discern a divine power; and well may we thankfully learn, in our calmer times, what the great confessors of bygone ages teach us from the scaffold and the stake, never to give up the Bible.

CHAPTER IX.

SCRIPTURE AND TRADITION.

1. WE have already referred to the claim sometimes set up on the part of the "Church" as the only authoritative witness to the contents of Scripture. To this claim another is added, yet more daring—that of a right to supplement the written word by oral declarations as to truth and duty. Tradition, it is said, as well as the Bible, authoritatively declares to us the Divine Will. The Scriptures, in fact, are incomplete, until the Church has spoken: and as the Church is a "living voice," new dogmas may at any time be added on its authority to the things which are surely to be believed among us. Now, in opposition to all this, we have to maintain the familiar truth summed up in the noble words of Chillingworth, "The Bible, and the Bible alone, is the religion of Protestants."

2. The claim to supplement the written word by the voice of "the church," or the tradition of the elders, is not peculiar to a corrupted Christianity. There was the same tendency among the Jews of old.* Every part of the Mosaic law was overlaid by commandments handed down by word of mouth from earlier generations; while the early histories of the Bible were

* See especially Mark vii. 1—13.

accompanied by the absurdest fables. Yet all were to be believed on the same authority. In fact, according to the teaching of the rabbis,* it was even more praiseworthy to credit the spoken than the written word, inasmuch as it required more faith.

3. Now it was one part of Christ's work to disentangle the law from these additions and perversions. In fact, His great principle was the same as that by which we hold. "I came not to make void the law, but to fulfil. . . . Ye have made void the law by your tradition. . . . All things must be fulfilled which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning Me."

4. In applying the doctrine thus laid down, two remarks by way of qualification are requisite.

i. There was a time, as shown in our third chapter, when tradition was safely to be trusted as a vehicle of divine truth. In the ages of memory, as distinguished from the ages of literature, the history and the law were handed down by word of mouth from generation to generation. Yet how brief the history! how

* "Not only unconsciously, but with the fullest purpose, the rabbis exalted their precepts above the law of Moses. In the Talmud we read, 'The words of the scribes are more noble than the words of the law; for the words of the law are both hard and easy, but the words of the scribes are all easy to be understood.' Again, 'He who dealt with Scripture does a thing indifferent; he who reads the Mishna has a reward; but he who devotes himself to the Gemara is most meritorious of all.'"—*Lange.* The Mishna and Gemara were the great repositories of Jewish tradition. Lightfoot's notes on Mark vii. and Matt. xv. may be consulted by the curious.

simple the law! When the annals became voluminous, the law elaborate, the doctrine profound, the written record became a necessity.

ii. In disowning the authority of tradition, we do not undervalue oral explanation; nay, we do not altogether reject the testimony of those who declare to us the beliefs and usages of the past. "The Bible alone" does not mean, as some absurdly represent, the Bible for every one to interpret for himself, without the living voice or the accompanying commentary. It means only this, that the commentary or the oral explanation must not be accepted as *ultimate* authority. Frankly, and in the spirit of the apostle, must every teacher be prepared to stand by the appeal, "Judge ye what I say;" and to commend as "noble" the followers of those Bereans who declined to take even an inspired exposition upon trust, but "searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so."

5. What, then, are the chief objections to the authority of tradition? Briefly, it is *unnecessary, unauthorized, unsafe, untruthful.*

i. It is unnecessary. If the Scriptures are to be believed at all, their sufficiency must be admitted. They "are able," says the apostle Paul to Timothy, his son in the faith, "to make thee wise unto salvation." What more, then, can be needed? In the parable of Dives and Lazarus our Lord bears most emphatic testimony to the completeness of the means provided to instruct and save. "They have Moses and the prophets," whom "if they hear not, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead."

How much stronger the argument when we can add, They have CHRIST and the apostles! Here again we may refer to the majestic words of Chillingworth:—"This, therefore,—the Scripture,—and this only, I have reason to believe; this I will profess; according to this I will live; and for this, if there be any occasion, I will not only willingly, but even gladly, lose my life. Propose me anything out of this Book, and I will subscribe it with hand and heart, as knowing no demonstration can be stronger than this,—God hath said so, therefore it is true. In other things I will take no man's liberty of judgment from him, neither shall any man take mine from me. I will think no man the worse man, or the worse Christian, I will love no man the less, for differing in opinion from me; and what measure I mete to others I expect from them again. I am fully assured that God does not, and that therefore men ought not to require more of any man than this, to believe the Scripture to be God's word, to endeavour to find the true sense of it, and to live according to it."

ii. Tradition is unauthorized. The usual claim of its upholders is, that a power to interpret and declare truth beyond the Bible teachings has been handed over to the church. Now, without examining the claims of any particular church, we have only to say, Produce your authority! There is not a passage in any record of our Saviour's life, or in any production of His apostles, which intimates the delegation of such a power.* Whensoever tradition is mentioned, it is

* The three passages most relied on are Matt. xvii. 17, "If

for emphatic rebuke. "Why do ye transgress the commandment of God by your tradition?" "Ye have made the commandment of God of none effect." "In vain do they worship, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men." "Every plant which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up."

There are, however, two passages in the Second Epistle to the Thessalonians, which seem at first sight to breathe a different spirit, and to recognize the value of tradition. In chap. ii. 15, the apostle writes, "Stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle;" and chap. iii. 6, "Withdraw yourselves from every brother

he refuse to *hear the church*, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican."—a text which plainly means that if an offending brother will not accept the counsel and reproof of "the congregation," he must be excluded from it: ver. 18, "Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven," &c., which, from the connection, evidently refers to the same case of discipline: and 1 Tim. iii. 15, "The church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth." Now on this passage it may be remarked: (1) that the "pillar" and "ground," or base, is used to support *that which already exists*, not to construct a new edifice; so that instead of hinting that the church is empowered to add to the sacred structure, the words plainly imply the contrary: but (2) the exact punctuation of the passage is not quite certain. Some connect the description with the "mystery" that follows, others with Timothy himself. We cannot now discuss the question; but the words of Chrysostom are significant, "The church is not the pillar and ground of the truth, but the truth is the pillar and ground of the church."

that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received from us." On these passages it is sufficient to remark that the "tradition" is plainly the word received direct from an apostle, and, as the former of the texts has it, supposably written in the "epistle" to which reference is made. Such traditions are very different from those of "the church." *

It is observable that the great argument employed by Dr. Newman in his "Apologia pro Vitâ Suâ," to uphold the claim of the church to an authoritative inculcation of God's will, is entirely *à priori*. The thing must be so, he reasons. The ignorance and vice of the world are so manifold, its confusions so wild, its ignorance so dense, its mystery so tremendous, that we cannot believe an omnipotent God of love to have left it without a living infallible depositary of that truth by which only these evils can be cured. No body whatever, save the Catholic church, even claims to hold this position; *therefore*, we must, from the very nature and necessity of the case, accept its authority. It is easy to reply, first, that we are no fit judges as to what *must be* in such a matter as this; we have only the right to ask *what is;* secondly, that the evidence of facts is wanting as to the claim so set up; and, thirdly, that the remedy for all the frightful evils so vividly

* The same word is translated "ordinances" in 1 Cor. xi. 2. The verb is found in a corresponding sense in Acts vi. 14, "the customs which Moses *delivered* us;" Rom. vi. 17, "the form of doctrine which was *delivered* you" (literally "into which ye were delivered"); Jude 3, "the faith which was once (once for all) *delivered* unto the Saints."

described is to be found in the simple teaching of Scripture. To add the authority of the church does not mend the matter one whit. "If they hear not Christ and His apostles," the traditions of the elders will have no influence to move, no power to save.

iii. Tradition is unsafe. For, first, the channel through which it passes is corrupt. The early churches, both in doctrine and practice, were marked by great and startling imperfections. From which of the Christian communities, so faithfully delineated in the New Testament, could we accept aught relating to Christian faith or life, as from one having authority? From the Church at Corinth? From the seven churches in Asia? They misunderstood and corrupted apostolic statements: of the statements, therefore, how could we take their report? They erred in the faith: how then can we copy their creeds? They were often evil in practice: how then can we take the law from their lips, or conform our lives to their example? Similar remarks, with even more force, could be made of the churches in subsequent generations. Nowhere is there a standard that we can trust, except in the pure, unchanging word of God.

Then, again, tradition is unsafe because it is liable to continual alteration. Whatever statement might be left to pass from lip to lip, and from age to age, would be sure to be modified, consciously or unconsciously. Human prejudice or passion, incompetency to remember, or undesigned inventiveness, would be sure to colour the tradition in its course.

On a small scale this fact may be illustrated by a

game, devised, we believe, by the late Archbishop Whately, for an intelligent party of young people, and called by this very name, "Tradition." First of all, a story is written down by one of the company, and read privately to one other; that other repeats it to a third; the third to a fourth, and so on, each repetition being private, until it has passed through the whole circle. Then the last to hear the narrative also writes it down, and the paper is read aloud, together with that of the original author. The difference between the two is amazing; and yet each narrator in succession intended to be accurate and complete. The history of religious tradition in the world is exactly analogous to this. Let the origin be apostolic, let the channel be pure, let the transmission be in all good faith, and yet by an inevitable law the story is so changed as to show that such guidance at any rate cannot be trusted as infallible.

iv. Tradition is untruthful. Truth must be consistent with itself. Now, as a matter of fact, many of those doctrines which rest upon tradition are inconsistent with direct statements of God's word. Our Lord illustrates this by a comparison of the "corban" device with the fifth commandment. We might adduce further examples, were this the place for such discussion, in the doctrine of purgatory, in the practice of image worship and the invocation of saints, in the merit ascribed to acts of obedience, and in many other tenets plainly contradicted in the Scriptures. A child who has learned to "take God at His word" may perceive

the falsity of such doctrines. The test is unerring, "To the law and to the testimony."

6. To sum up all, then; Scripture is complete, sufficient, authoritative, certain, true; tradition wants all these marks, and is therefore unworthy of our trust.

CHAPTER X.

HARMONY OF SCRIPTURE WITH ITSELF.

THE variety of Scripture is one of its most striking phenomena. More than fifteen hundred years separate the composition of the first book from that of the last. They relate not only to different periods of the world's history, but to different ages in the progress of human thought. The earlier records stand in contact with the "wisdom of Egypt," the later with the wisdom of Greece and of Rome. Every grade of human society contributes something to the record. Here it is a king that speaks; there the divine inspiration passes into the soul of a vinedresser: the profoundest of the world's legislators utters the opening sentences of the volume; and its latest utterances are breathed by the lips of a fisherman from the lake of Galilee. Every form of literary composition also appears, from the plainest prose narrative to the loftiest of poetic strains. In one place the simple rule of duty is laid down in a style altogether ethical; in others it is embodied in the living characters of human biographies, many sublime and holy, ONE spotlessly pure. The incidental teaching of the Book is even more copious than the direct. There is no reserve, whether in the doctrine or the moral teaching. The Bible is the most sincere and artless

book in the world. Its foes have even denied its world-wide bearing and intention, on the very ground of its evident adaptation throughout to the circumstances of a special people and the needs of a passing hour.

Now this variety must have led to discrepancy, contradiction, confusion, had not some all-controlling MIND secretly directed the course of thought. If, in short, the Bible is one, it is thereby proved to be divine. The proof is as complete, granting but the fact, as in the world of nature itself. In the universe around us there is no more convincing attestation of the Divine workmanship than the unity and proportion of the several parts. Thus we conclude that the maker of the flower is also the creator of the star. One God, or a chaotic world, is reason's own conclusion. So we say, one Spirit, or a Scripture of confusion. The world is not a chaos, and therefore it had one creator; the Bible is a grand and perfect harmony, and therefore we argue, by an exact analogy, that it is the same divine Spirit whose voice we hear throughout.

To establish the fact, with all the proper explanations, the elucidation of difficulties, and the refutation of objections, would require a volume to itself. We can but offer a few hints for the thoughtful.

First, there are certain elementary truths which obviously characterize the entire teaching of Scripture so completely as to mark it out from all the collections of writings extending over long eras of history, and relating to the developments of any religious system.

One of these truths is the *Unity and Personality*

of God. It may have been before a line of our Bible had been written, certainly it was before more than a small portion of it could have existed, that One proclaimed amid the solitudes of Horeb, I AM THAT I AM. To the truth so enunciated Scripture remains unswervingly faithful. It is one long protest against atheism, polytheism, and every system which, under the pretext of honouring the Deity, removes Him from our sympathies and love. "Our Father" is but a sublimer form of the truth announced in the burning bush; and the further revelation of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, so far from conflicting with the doctrine of the divine unity, only re-establishes it on a profounder basis. "Hear, O Israel,"—O world!—"the Lord our God is one Lord." Such are the words which herald "the first and great commandment,"—the fundamental truth on which "hang all the law and the prophets."

A second fundamental truth which all Scripture harmoniously teaches is that of *reconciliation by sacrifice.* From the hour when at the gates of a lost paradise the first transgressors of the human race were clothed with the skins of beasts, there has been but one way to acceptance with God. The gospel is in Leviticus, and the Cross embodies the true and deepest meaning of ten thousand altars.

On this most important topic we may remark that it would be a mistake to suppose that the Jews of necessity understood the spiritual meaning of their own sacrifices, or traced the reference to a divine Mediator. It would be more curious than useful to

ask whether Abraham, Moses, David, and the long line of the Aaronic priesthood, either clearly themselves comprehended, or kept alive the tradition among the people, how One should come in the end of time to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. The thought may or may not have been in their minds. It was in the mind of God, and the proof of divine foreknowledge and pre-arrangement is even more striking if we regard the patriarchs, prophets, priests, and saints of old as in a great measure *unconscious* instruments in bringing His great design to pass.

Again, the heathen institutes also really and virtually prefigured Christ, partly as derived from the original divine command, transmitted and perverted by tradition, and partly as expressing a sense of sin and the conscious need of deliverance. Like those old Athenians, the world reared many an altar; though "To an Unknown God" might be the only inscription which true insight could discern. Here, too, is indirect testimony to the value of that revelation which fully and explicitly contained the ordinance of sacrifice, in evident reference to Him who was to come.

Once more, we are not always capable of tracing the harmony into particulars. Many questions arise, for instance, as to the precise meaning of particular sacrifices under the law, as the "trespass offering," the "sin offering;" nor can these points always be satisfactorily settled. The subject is one which ought to be studied, and which is certainly susceptible of far more elucidation than it has yet received. But the analogies established in the Epistle to the Hebrews are at least

sufficient to show *in general* that the whole of the elaborate sacrificial system of the Old Testament was arranged by God with express reference to the one offering which should "for ever perfect the sanctified,"

Further, there are passages, both in the Psalms and the prophets, which seem to break in upon the harmony, by calling the people from ceremonial religion to morality, as though the latter were incomparably higher. See, for instance, Psa. li. 16; Isa. i. 13—17; and especially Mic. vi. 6—8. On the strength chiefly of these three passages, some theological writers have set "prophet" over against "priest," saying that the former arose to correct the error of the latter, not, as we might have expected, explaining the spiritual significance of the sacrifices, but denouncing them altogether and seeking to do away with them; by which of course all their value as a means of preparation would have been lost. Now this view is, we are convinced, one-sided and false. The sacrifice is denounced in comparison with morality, not to show that the type was meaningless, or otherwise than most precious, but to remind the world that the purpose and end of all such offerings was righteousness and true holiness. The sacrifice of Christ teaches this lesson in the highest form, combines priest and prophet in one, and establishes a law of holiness in fulfilling the law of expiation. "His name thou shalt call JESUS: for He shall save His people *from their sins*." He "gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, *zealous of good works*."

One of the most wonderful things in the gospel, and most manifestly divine, is, then, the harmony which, *alone of all the world's religions*, it vindicates between the law of sacrifice and the law of personal holiness. The subject is a most fertile and suggestive one for every reader to trace out by thought and study.

Another doctrine in which the harmony of Scripture can be seen through the superficial and occasional discrepancy is that of a *future state*—"the resurrection."

In the Old Testament this truth does not appear, especially in the early parts of it, in anything like the fulness which it possesses in the New. Yet it is there, as a thought of God, decisively indicated, yet waiting its due time to be distinctly revealed. Our Lord showed this when He quoted the words, "I am the God of Abraham," as a proof to the Sadducees that man should live again. It is a very remarkable fact that the Samaritan sect now dwelling at Nablous, who have received from their fathers the five books of Moses, and neither acknowledge, nor ever have acknowledged, any other Scriptures as divine, yet hold the doctrine of the resurrection; and when a recent missionary was talking on the point to the Samaritan high priest, the latter cited *the same passage* as a confirmation.*

Bishop Warburton's argument in support of the divine legation of Moses is well known. In brief it is this:—All other moral preachers have found it neces-

* See Mr. Mills's "Visit to Nablous and the Samaritans," p. 219.

sary to sustain their authority by an appeal to the retributions of the other world. Moses did not do this, but boldly promised temporal happiness to the virtuous, and threatened adversity and temporal misery to transgressors. His legislation would soon manifestly have been brought to shame had it not been supported by divine sanction; and Moses must have been assured of that sanction before he could have abandoned the usual array of motives to virtue for those which could so easily be brought to the test. The argument is ingenious, though it partly fails on the question of what Moses did *not* teach. Assuredly the New Testament only has brought "life and immortality *to light;*" but in the Old, though under a veil of darkness, the doctrine exists; while many a type up to the crowning one of the holy of holies, still speaks of heaven.

These are but examples of the kind of illustration for which the present subject calls. In the passages selected, Christ speaks of the gospel as the fulfilment of the law, and of His work as bringing into one point everything valuable in the Old Testament. For this result no merely human plans could have availed.

The case is very similar to that of the collection of various hewn stones, beams of timber, and costly marbles, which should prove to be adapted for combination into one symmetrical building. In such a case could anybody doubt that one mind had directed the preparation of the material, though very likely with a purpose beyond what any individual workman might have known? When Solomon's temple was

erected, the timber was shaped in the forest of Lebanon, the stones were prepared in their quarries, and nothing remained but to combine them in the structure.

> No axes fell, no ponderous hammers rung;
> Like some tall palm the noiseless fabric sprung.

Thus was shown the wise master builder's overruling skill. The Scripture fabric is a yet nobler and more elaborate edifice; and the harmony with which its diverse materials, prepared for use by such widely different hands, have been combined, declares the Architect divine.

Difficulties, as might be expected, present themselves.* The greatest of all is the diversity which is occasionally found in the moral tone of different parts of Scripture. Many good people, even, have found some of David's psalms hard to reconcile with the sermon on the mount. It would be impossible to treat these difficulties now in detail: one general remark must suffice. The theme of Scripture is "an *increasing* purpose." Designedly, the beginnings are elementary. For the world's childhood we have childish things. If anything beyond this simple principle need be asserted, we would add that the passages which are supposed to be discordant in their moral tone with the law of love have been often misunderstood; sometimes also the law of love has been itself misinterpreted, as though it involved an utter denial and destruction of "stern" justice, instead

* See further remarks on Scripture difficulties, in chap. xii., "How to Study the Bible.

of being itself the highest embodiment of righteousness. Let Scripture be but fairly read, and it will be seen to contain throughout, in every differing form, that harmony which can only be reached through diversity. In music, unison is one thing, but harmony another. In social life, and in the church of Christ, union does not mean uniformity. So in Scripture the external differences but display a spiritual oneness, and in every fragment of the Book we have the revelation of one God, one Sacrifice, one law, and one immortal hope.

CHAPTER XI.

THE SCRIPTURES A SACRED TRUST.

THE apostle Paul, in his letter to the Roman church, makes it his first special business to prove that all men, whether Jews or Gentiles, are alike sinners. An objector is supposed to ask, "What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit is there of circumcision?" The apostle replies, "Much every way: chiefly, because that *unto them were committed the oracles of God.*"* Thus, of all the distinctive honours of Israel, the foremost was the possession of the divine revelation. It was, in fact, a privilege including all beside. Hence, of the hallelujah songs with which the Psalter concludes, the central thought is this:—

"He showeth His word unto Jacob,
His statutes and His judgments unto Israel.
He hath not dealt so with any nation:
And as for His judgments, they have not known them.
HALLELUJAH."†

2. There were two scenes in the ancient history of Israel which perhaps more impressively than any other illustrate this great privilege. The incidents were just one thousand years apart:‡ the story of the

* Rom. iii. 1, 2. † Psa. cxlvii. 19, 20.
‡ Deut. iv., about 1450 B.C.; Neh. viii., about 450 B.C.

chosen people, in their highest greatness and their most abject decay, all lies between the two. Yet the tone, the lesson, were the same.

The former scene, recorded in the fourth chapter of the Book of Deuteronomy, was when the law-giver who had led the tribes to the confines of the promised land summoned "all Israel," "in the eleventh month, in the first day of the month"—so specifically noted is the great occasion,—to listen to his final enunciation of "the statutes," "the judgments," and "the commandments of the LORD their God." The nation was about to enter on a new life—first of conquest, then of repose and greatness; but all their glory would depend upon the remembrance and observance of the words which the LORD had spoken "out of the midst of the fire, of the cloud, and of the thick darkness." By these words must Israel stand or fall. How solemn then the injunction, "Only take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently, lest thou forget!" Not a word do we read of the demeanour of the august assembly. It must have been a time of high hope and kindling resolution, chastened by sorrow for the approaching loss of a leader so illustrious and honoured. But his grave, prepared by angel hands, already perchance awaited him on the heights of Pisgah; and it was for those to whom he spoke to go forth and achieve that destiny with which were associated the hopes of the world.

How different the second scene, of which we read in the eighth chapter of Nehemiah! The destiny had been in part accomplished, yet amid what vicissitudes

and sorrows! Canaan had been subdued; great kings had swayed the sceptre of Israel; the temple, earth's one sanctuary, had uplifted its gates to welcome the bright manifestation of a present Deity; a consecrated priesthood had offered solemn sacrifice from age to age; the goodly fellowship of prophets had in long succession declared the will of Jehovah; but there had been disunion, division, decline, with frequent relapse into idolatry, and long forgetfulness of God. The judgment long ago threatened in the law-giver's last words upon the plains of Moab had too certainly come to pass. Ten tribes had closed their national existence long ago, in wide dispersion and bondage among the heathen. Two tribes only perpetuated the hope of Israel and of the world. But these also had mourned in captivity "by the rivers of Babylon." Now once more they are in their own Jerusalem—a scattered remnant. The ten centuries that separate the periods are not more than adequate to measure the difference between the hopefulness of the nation's exulting youth, as it rested on the east of the Jordan waiting the summons of the silver trumpets to advance, and the weary sadness which mingled with the gratitude of those who, ninety years* after the permission to return from Babylon, had now set themselves in earnest to rebuild the city of God. Then is it that "Ezra the scribe" gathers into "the street that was before the water gate" "the congregation both of men

* *I.e.*, from "the first year of Cyrus, king of Persia" (Ezra i. 1), or 536 B.C., to "the twentieth year of Artaxerxes the king" (Neh. ii. 1), or 446 B.C.

and women, and all that could hear with understanding, upon the first day of the seventh month," and declared to them all the words that had been spoken in the plains of Moab a thousand years ago. A sad experience now enforced the lessons of divine truth, and "all the people wept when they heard the words of the law."

3. The value of the privilege thus assured to the chosen race may be estimated by way of contrast. In the second chapter of this work we attempted to delineate the state of the world without a revelation from God, showing that in such a state of things there could be neither *knowledge*, *certainty* nor *holiness*. Without retracing the ground then traversed, it will be sufficient to remind the reader that the possession of a divine revelation insures these priceless blessings. A nation or an individual soul to which God has spoken, and which has recognized His voice, has attained divine truth, divine certainty, and a divine law of holiness. Or, to express the same thoughts in scripture phrase, "Thy word is *truth;*" "Thy testimonies are very *sure;*" "The commandment is *holy*, just, and good."*

4. There is, however, one point of view in which the privilege was most strikingly set forth by the words of Moses. He was speaking, be it remembered, of the collective life of a nation. And though Israel was the people of God in a sense in which no other earthly community can ever again be so, there is a deep prin-

* John xvii. 17 (Psa. cxix. 151); Psa. xciii. 5; Rom. vii. 12.

ciple involved, applicable to the prosperity and happiness of every society on earth. Take the seventh and eight verses,—

"What nation is there so great, *who hath God so nigh unto them,* as the LORD our God is in all things that we call upon him for? And what nation is there so great, *that hath statutes and judgments so righteous* as all this law, which I set before you this day?"

5. Here are two distinct points. First, with the gift of a revelation, God gives Himself. His word is not a mere message, carried, as it were, by couriers to realms far away from the Monarch's own abode. The Spirit abides in the Word, which thus becomes not a dead letter, but a living oracle.

It is the perfection of a government so to utter and so to enforce its decrees that its most distant subjects shall have the sense as of some mighty presence, ready at the instant to mark and to punish the violation of law, to protect the good, and to crush the rebellious. So, with some little exaggeration, it is said that the eye and arm of British law are everywhere through the far-spread realms that own its sway—not more surely near in the metropolis itself than on the banks of the Ganges, or in the pastoral solitudes of Australia.

Again, it is the perfection of letter-writing when a friend, in addressing the absent or the distant, can so express his thoughts as to call up a vivid realization of himself—the reader seeming to hear the kindly voice; half expecting, as he looks up from the page, to meet the glance of the loving eye; and in every sentence discerning the depths of the writer's soul.

These are but illustrations of what it is to have God nigh unto us in His word. That word is "quick," or "living," and therefore "powerful." To those who possess it, its first lesson is that they are in the Infinite Presence. The fellowship of earth and heaven is restored. It is not enough to say, "God has spoken once," for God is speaking now. Happy the people thus invited to receive the truth from truth's very fountain. Happier those who have understood that the privilege implies a corresponding responsibility, and who have so recognized the presence of God as to hearken to His voice, and to walk in His light.

6. The second point in the above-quoted verses is, that in the divine Word a perfect law of righteousness is possessed.

As the former point has reference to the relation of men to God, so this refers to that between man and man. "Righteousness," says the wise man, "exalteth a nation." No community can lastingly dwell together in peace unless its organization is based upon principles of justice. Sin is a disuniting power. If a company of young people enter into association, be it only for a day's excursion, they will inevitably be dissevered and alienated if selfishness and unfairness are allowed to have their way. This simple illustration may explain the breaking up of great monarchies, the fury of civil wars, the disorganization, in turn, of almost every great confederacy among men. All history shows that a law of righteousness is the first condition of lasting national life.

How is this law to be discovered? and how applied?

Not, as is sometimes alleged, by a sense of common interests. Not even by a hope of mutual benefits.

Many of us well remember how it was predicted that the Great Exhibition of 1851 would inaugurate a commercial millennium. Was it not plain to every visitor of that fairy-like home of the industry of all lands, that nations could prosper only as they were agreed, that war was a great absurdity, and that the way to universal peace and good-will was to exchange commodities amicably all over the world? What events have succeeded these triumphant prophecies? Amongst other things, the Crimean war, the Indian Mutiny, the Italian revolution, the struggle between France and Austria, the Danish war, the civil conflict in the United States, and the gigantic war between Germany and France. There are, probably, now more soldiers in the world than ever; and Europe has scarcely seen a month of more frightful carnage since the dawning of its history than the month of August, 1870!

These "wars and fightings," as the apostle James declares, are from our "lusts." We have too fondly hoped to secure from the balance of men's various selfishnesses the results of disinterested good-will. The task is for ever impossible! The experience of ages has proved that there is only one power which can harmonize the jarring wills of men, and so secure "peace on earth." This is the power of RIGHTEOUSNESS.

Herein, then, we have another view of the privilege of possessing the word of God. It contains the secret, the only secret, of national permanence and power.

The question is often asked, Will Britain pass, as other nations have passed before, to gradual decline and inevitable fall? Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Greece, and Rome, have successively risen to the height of greatness, and have successively fallen. Akin to them in power, will Britain prove akin to them in destiny? We answer at once, Not if Britain be mindful of her highest privilege. The foundation of those empires was essentially worldly. Human selfishness was the ultimate law, whether exemplified in the statesman's craft or the warrior's pride. If such be England's law, England too must fall. But if her people have learned the law of divine righteousness; if the principles of Bible truth have come to regulate the intercourse of man with man, and of class with class; if, in a word, the spirit of the community is to ask, not What is expedient? but What is right? then there need be no fear for our country. A higher lesson has been learned than the proudest olden empires ever knew, and the country which holds this truth as its heritage need never fear.

Among the ceremonials of the world there is scarcely one more noble in its simplicity than the presentation of the Bible to the British Monarch in the Coronation Service; as "the most valuable thing which the world contains." Let us, however, remember, that it is not by royal recognition, or the tribute of the State, that the Divine Law is most truly honoured among us. It is at least possible for a collective confession to be a mere form, or worse, a manifest hypocrisy. The community is made up of individuals,

and the greatness of the nation is in the truthfulness and the nobleness of those who constitute the nation. Hence the urgency of the appeal to every one to prize, to study, and to understand that Word which is the only charter of national greatness, peace, and freedom.

CHAPTER XII.

HOW TO STUDY THE BIBLE.

IT cannot be questioned that many superstitions characterised the Israelitish use of the Sacred Books. After the solemn appeal of Ezra, to which reference was made in our last chapter, there was never any more lightness in the people's treatment of Scripture. From that time it was preserved, in the outward form and letter of it, with the most scrupulous care. It was transcribed, through successive generations, by persons expressly devoted to the task. To insure perfect accuracy, the verses, the words, the letters, were counted and registered. If transcribers met with a plain mistake in the manuscript which was their leading authority, they would not alter it, but, copying the error, would place the correction in the margin. It was a saying of theirs, that every letter and part of a letter was sacred.* Hence, though Christ and His apostles often refer to Jewish perversions of the meaning of Scripture, they never accuse the Jews of altering the words

* "Letter," *jot.* (Matt. v. 18), the *Yod* in Hebrew, or *iota* in Greek, the smallest letter of the alphabet. "Part of a letter," *tittle* in the same passage,—like, for instance, the distinction between O and Q, or E and F.

of Scripture. Their reverence may have been exaggerated into superstition, but the very superstition became a safeguard; and we may be as sure as we can be on any ancient literary question whatever, that we have at this day the *very words* which Ezra read to the Jewish congregation in "the streets that was before the water gate," upon the first day of the seventh month, two thousand three hundred and fifteen years ago!

2. "These words," the Hebrew Lawgiver had said, "thou shalt bind as a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes; and thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates." In the letter these commands have been obeyed for ages. The sacred words, written upon parchment, have been bound on the forehead or the arm; or have been inscribed in beautiful characters and with rich ornamentations upon the door-post or the gate; but their obedience too often stopped. The inscription was supposed to have some magical charm,* the spirit of the commandment being forgotten. In this way the Scriptures have become an idol rather than a guide.

Amongst ourselves also it is possible for our very reverence of Scripture to lead us to its superstitious use. Too many persons "read a chapter" simply as a matter of form, without intelligence or thought. It may be a genealogy or a psalm, or the fragment of an

* The word *phylactery*, applied to these strips of parchment bound upon the person, as Matt. xxiii. 5, properly means *preservative*, and was used because they were thought to repel the attacks of evil spirits.

epistle; it matters not; and no deeper impression results than would be made by the inscription of the passage upon a door-post. To readers of this kind the Scriptures seldom or never speak with any articulate voice; and the daily performance is an idolatrous, rather than a reasonable service.

3. This extreme of error is perhaps comparatively infrequent among Christians. But even where the understanding is exercised to some extent, there may be misconception arising from superficiality of view. The Bible, be it remembered, does not yield its meaning at once; the "treasure" is "hidden," and we must dig long and assiduously before we can reach it. Sometimes we hear the Bible spoken of unguardedly as a very simple book. Now it is quite certain that the great essentials of the gospel are revealed with perfect clearness. The record of "God in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them," is written in characters of light. The trust to which we must cling, the principles by which we are to shape out conduct, the consolations by which we need to be upheld, and the hopes by which our life and death may be gladdened, are all set forth with perfect clearness. The wayfaring man, though a fool, shall not err *therein*. But there are a thousand things beside, in their place most important, where the wayfarer must pause and ponder well.

John Bunyan describes the pilgrims as bearing with them a roll, with plain instructions for every emergency. When the way was uncertain, or when danger threatened, they had only to open this roll to find a

direction all-sufficient for their guidance. Is the Bible such a guide? It is, *if understood aright.* But it is not sufficient to take a text and apply its words without reflection to any point of duty, doctrine, or comfort where they may seem to apply.

Some persons have been known to adopt the plan of Bunyan's pilgrims quite literally, deciding difficult questions by the random opening of the Bible, and applying to the matter in hand whatever text the eye might first light upon.* The practice is as superstitious as any other kind of fortune-telling, and is additionally criminal, as treating the word of God with ignorant irreverence.

4. The false doctrines, the perverted practices, the fanatical superstitions which so largely darken the history of Christendom are mainly the record of *scriptures misunderstood.* To prove or to illustrate this statement would now be far too large a task. Any thoughtful reader would find it worth while to test its truth. From the enthusiastic warrior, who has held that "the sword of the Lord and of Gideon" had descended to his hands, to the proud theologian who has read the promise that the gates of hell shall not prevail against the church, as securing the triumph of his own special belief, the method of reasoning has been one. Sadder still has been the case of the self-righteous, who have quoted chapter and verse to

* Many readers will recollect how other books have been used in like manner by the superstitious. The *Sortes Virgilianæ* were once famous, Virgil's poems being employed as described above.

authorize their arrogant claim to the divine favour, or of the self-condemned, who have shut themselves up in despair by the perversion of some Bible warning. To meet cases like these, and to regulate Christian thought and Christian obedience on true principles, the one thing needful is an intelligent comprehension of the Word of God. And if this end is to be attained at all, in our generation at least, it must chiefly be attained by Sunday school, Bible class, and family instruction.

II. (1.) Rules and methods for the intelligent study of Scripture are often given. One of the most important is, that the reader should place himself as far as possible in the position of those to whom the passage in question was primarily addressed. In other words, he should, in estimating the words before him, take into account their speaker, their hearers, the age in which they were spoken, the circumstances of their utterance, and their original purpose. "We have, indeed, heard persons say that they studiously excluded from their minds all thought of the human writer, whether it were Paul, or John, or Isaiah, or David, and considered themselves to be reading only the word of God." Reverential as this may sound, there is a misconception here which has all the effect of irreverence. Surely, "as Paul and John, and David and Isaiah wrote to different persons, in different stages of the world's history, and in many respects unlike each other; what was said to one of them would have been often useless and sometimes hurtful to the rest—so, therefore, to ourselves." * These good

* Dr. Arnold. "Rugby Sermons."

people ought, therefore, precisely to reverse their procedure: God spake "at *sundry* times and *in divers* manners;" and to understand the true application of His words, the "time" and the "manner" must be carefully considered.

2. We can but indicate a few specimens of popular misapplication. The captious and perverse things said in the controversy between Job and his friends are quoted as though they were divine oracles; a similar use is made of speculations like those in Ecclesiastes. David's terrible words against his foes have been adopted as the true method of speaking of those whom *we* may consider the enemies of God. Statements that especially concerned the Jews, have been applied to all mankind; and prophecy has been so misread as to make a great part of Old Testament Scripture absolutely unintelligible. Nor of the Old alone; it has been lightly said of the Apocalypse, that its study either finds a man mad or leaves him so; surely a strange result to attribute to a book confessedly divine!

3. There are again doctrinal misapplications, resting on isolated passages, sometimes on single words, on the machinery of a parable, or the boldness of a metaphor; all of which would have been prevented by a due attention to the scope of the whole passage. Thus Esau is supposed to have vainly endeavoured to repent, or to secure acceptance for his penitence—"he found no place of repentance" (Heb xii. 17), the true meaning being that he could find no means of changing *his father's* mind in respect of the blessing. Once more, (Luke xvi. 8), "*the lord* commended the unjust steward

because he had done wisely;" *i. e.*, not Christ the Lord, but the steward's master; not, moreover, because he had acted rightly, but "wisely" *i. e.*, prudently, with a shrewdness which in this case was selfish cunning. Again (Matt. xx. 9), "when they came that were hired about the eleventh hour, they received every man a penny." Does this mean that if we turn to God at the eleventh hour, that is, in old age or dying moments, we shall receive the same reward as if we had served him all our lives? The study of the parable corrects the error, spoken as it was "not about individuals but nations; not about rewards in heaven but privileges on earth; not as furnishing a general rule of God's government, but as illustrating his dealings in one particular and extraordinary case."

By an application of the same principle we account for the apparent discrepancy between the Apostles Paul and James on the subject of faith. The simple explanation is, that Paul wrote to answer the earnest question, "What must I do to be saved?" James, to correct the irreligious notion that salvation was to be gained by assent to dogma. The faith of Paul is *Trust*, by means of which salvation is obtained; the faith of James is mere *Belief*, for which, as in itself meritorious, those to whom he wrote expected to obtain God's favour. With Paul, accordingly, faith justifies *the man*; with James, works justify the man's *professions*. "Faith without works," James says, "is dead." "Yes," Paul would have rejoined, "that is, it is not faith at all."

The Epistles indeed, on account both of their intrinsic

importance and of their peculiar style, especially require to be thus studied in their connexion. Every one of them is surrounded with its own set of local circumstances and personal associations, without some knowledge of which it cannot be really understood. We must strive as we read, to place ourselves in thought now in Rome, amid the little company of believers there; now at Corinth, with the large and self-important Christian community of that city; now with the hearty Macedonians of Philippi or Thessalonica; now with the bewildered converts of the Galatian towns; now with the ritualistic mother-church of Jerusalem; and now with the believers of the "Dispersion," to whom Peter addressed his fervent exhortations. We must estimate the special character of each community, must know something of their special temptations, must understand whereabouts in regard to the truth of Jesus they already were, that we may enter into the Apostolic reasonings. We must remember, likewise, that the Epistles are real *letters;* personal, digressive, special in their purpose, yet complete. Their course of thought must be traced throughout, before the separate parts can be rightly understood. Every *therefore*, as in Rom. viii. 1, and in xii. 1, suggests links of connexion which it is of the highest importance to trace. It is easy and common, but careless and deceptive, to "snatch out," in the words of Locke, "a few words as if they were separate from the rest, to serve a purpose to which they do not at all belong, and with which they have nothing to do. This, indeed," he adds, "is the benefit of loose sentences, and Scripture crumbled

into verses which quickly turn into independent aphorisms. These divisions also have given occasion to reading the Epistles by parcels, and in scraps, which has farther confirmed the evil arising from such partitions. And I doubt not but every one will confess it to be a very unlikely way to come to the understanding of any other letters, to read them piecemeal, a bit to-day and another scrap to-morrow, and so on by broken intervals: especially if the pause and cessation should be made, as the chapters in the Epistles, which end sometimes in the middle of a discourse, and sometimes in the middle of a sentence!"

III. Hitherto we have spoken chiefly of the Scriptures as consisting of individual and various parts, to be interpreted each according to its position and intent. As, however, these parts blend into a symmetrical whole, they must be studied also by *mutual comparison.*

1. The application of this rule to the historical portions of the Bible is obvious. When the same events are recorded more than once, as in the history of the kingdom of Judah, and in the memoirs of our Lord, we know how useful it is to compare the narratives; by their mutual aid supplying omissions, noting coincidences, and accounting as best we may for apparent disagreement. The result is always not only a better acquaintance with the order of the occurrences, but a deeper conviction of the truth of the several accounts. The very discrepancies, by showing that there was no conspiracy, prove decisively that the agreements can only be attributable to truth. Only let us beware of supposing that we can ever frame a

complete "Harmony." The attempts to accomplish this are laudable, and have brought to light a great number of most interesting coincidences, with cumulative attestation to the truthfulness of the various records; but many difficulties remain, the only key to which is in facts to us unknown. From the impossibility of ascertaining these facts, no harmonist can be perfectly sure of his work, however ingenious or thorough. We cannot, for instance, now know the exact circumstances of the miracle at Jericho (Matt. xx. 30—34; Mark x. 46—52; Luke xviii. 35—43), nor the precise words, in the several languages mentioned, of Pilate's inscription above the cross (Matt. xxvii. 37; Mark xv. 26; Luke xxiii. 38; John xix. 19), nor the number of St. Paul's visits to Corinth (2 Cor. xiii. 1). Many similar cases might be mentioned, over which more or less of uncertainty hangs, but which might be cleared up in a moment by the disclosure of some little fact which would link the whole into one. Enough, that such solutions are possible, that there is no actual contradiction, and that the truth of every narrative can be substantiated on independent grounds.*

2. The greatest value of this principle of comparison is undoubtedly in relation to doctrinal and practical

* As interesting material for comparative study, we may mention the history of David's numbering the people (2 Sam. xxiv.; 1 Chron. xxi.), the arrest of Jesus (Matt. xxvi.; Mark xiv.; Luke xxii.; John xviii.), the institution of the Lord's Supper (the first three Evangelists and 1 Cor. xi.), the appearances of Christ after His resurrection (the four Evangelists and 1 Cor. xv. 5—8), the conversion of the Apostle Paul (Acts ix. xxii. xxvi.)

truth. No one part of the Bible contains a perfect system of Theology. Each discourse or book in itself is but partial, while with the rest it contributes to the grand completeness. Forgetfulness of this leads into all kinds of false doctrine and one-sided Christianity. One man entrenches himself in the Epistle to the Romans, and cries, "I am of Paul." Another, rebuking the exclusiveness of his adherence, becomes himself as partial, while he rejoins, "And I of James." A third refuses to go beyond the Sermon on the Mount, and imagines that he thus establishes his right to say, "And I of Christ." Each partizan forgets the most important fact, that if the Scriptures wisely present one aspect of truth at a time, and that often with apparently exclusive stress, it is with a real reference to other views elsewhere given, and a distinct understanding that they shall be taken into account. The architect bestows all his attention and skill on each part of the building by turns, yet what would any of them be alone? And as well might we expect in any single column or moulding the true pattern of the edifice, as look for a *complete* statement of evangelical truth in the Parable of the Prodigal Son, in Paul's discourse on the Areopagus at Athens, or his first Epistle to the Corinthians. In the closing verses of the Sermon on the Mount, our Lord distinctly declares, that whosoever heard and fulfilled his sayings would stand firm in piety and prepared for judgment. The great motives of Christian obedience, and the Divine power which must influence the spirit to obey, are not even mentioned. Take the passage alone, and its

sense seems to be that pure morals are the condition of salvation. It is entirely from other parts of the New Testament that we find the absolute need of God's Spirit to create right thoughts and actions, with the truth that this celestial gift is the portion only of those who repent and trust according to the Gospel. "True religion" has been defined as "the doing of the Sermon on the Mount;" but it is needful to recollect that the "Sermon" cannot be "done" excepting by those who are "born again."

IV. To search the Scriptures, then, is no mere holiday task. The mind must be fully braced for the work; and the field must be explored as for hidden treasure. There is some mistake in the assertion so often made of the perfect clearness of the Word of God. It is by no means true that the wayfaring man, though a fool, cannot err *therein*. Many do err, even among the comparatively wise. True, the essentials of the great salvation are simple, the Gospel may be written in a sentence, and its invitation apprehended by a child. But beyond the elements of the faith there are far-reaching illimitable relations of truth. Why should we be surprised at this? Those revelations of Himself which God has given in His works, require similar thought and toil to understand them. Astronomy is not written on the sky, nor does Botany grow ready-made among the flowers. These sciences require investigation, comparison, study, the earnest use of our reasoning powers; and is it therefore wonderful that the Scriptures should make a similar claim.

Yet, here is the greatest glory of the written word,

that while in some respects it taxes the mightiest powers, and keeps the wisest always learning, it is in all essential points so simple that all can understand. Men were guided by the Polestar long before they became astronomers; and so, those to whom much may be mysterious in Scripture, are led by no uncertain radiance to life and immortality. The "way" in which "the wayfaring man shall not err," is not the path of History, or the mountain-road of Speculation, or the narrow defile of Argument, but "the way of Holiness." There is much in the Bible, as we have seen, of special application; but there is more that addresses itself alike to the whole family of man; there are many particulars in which the balance of Scripture with Scripture requires the greatest care and caution; but there are more in which some bright passage opens up at once the glorious way to truth and life. There are depths which the profoundest study cannot fathom, and heights to which the boldest imagination cannot climb; but there are paths which the most trembling intellect may tread, and broad uplands on which the very infant may repose.

CHAPTER XIII.

A SPIRITUAL UNDERSTANDING.

THE comparison between the universe and the revelation of God, His heavens and His word, which both declare His glory, is very familiar to the readers of Scripture. In one point especially does the parallel hold good; in the continued presence of the Author with His work. Creation is continued and carried out by Providence. True science, as well as devout religion, teaches us that God still lives and acts in every part of the world which once He made; "not far from every one of us." If once His Spirit "moved upon the face of the waters," their "many-twinkling smile," their awful majesty, alike attest that He still is there. If He said, "Let there be light and there was light," the word is repeated whenever the East is flushed with dawn, or the evening star appears in the twilight sky. If "He breathed into man's nostrils the breath of life," it is as true to-day that in Him we live, and move, and have our being. Just so is it with the spiritual creation embodied in the Scriptures. He who came forth from the hiding-place of His majesty to reveal wondrous truths to man, did not retire, when that work was done, into inaction and silence. He did not leave the world when the Bible was completed, any more than when

the six days of creation were over. In one sense, inspiration has never ceased. The Spirit, who in days past taught prophets and apostles, still reveals to the true disciple "the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." The influence indeed works silently—"He shall not testify of Himself"—but it is not less real, and may as truly dwell with us as with Moses, or Isaiah, or Paul. The Bible, then, and our souls, are not left to solitary fellowship. The Author is always near, and without His light and help we shall never appreciate the power and beauty of His word.

The Scriptures accordingly declare, that, for their right apprehension, a preparation of the heart is requisite. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, for they are spiritually discerned." So of Israel it is said "to this day, when Moses is read, the vail is upon their hearts." It is described, again, as the saddest feature in the condition of hardened souls, that they seeing see not, and hearing hear not, neither do they perceive.*"

What then is a spiritual understanding? There is no subject connected with the interpretation of Scripture on which there is more vagueness of belief—none, perhaps, in which there is so much danger of fanaticism.

II. The above quoted statements do not refer to any

* See 1 Cor. ii. 14; 2 Cor. iii. 15; Isa. vi. 9, 10; Matt. xiii. 13, 14; Ezek. xii. 2; John xii. 39, 40; Rom. xi. 8, 10; Prov. xiv. 6; 1 John ii. 20

hidden sense, above and beyond the literal grammatical meaning of Scripture. Expositors there have been in all ages who have sought for such significance; and licence has been accordingly given to the most erratic fancies. In very early times the canon was adopted that every Scripture had an allegorical, or mystical sense beyond the literal: and every interpreter was at liberty to apply the word according to his own sense of congruity. Thus the Bible became a vast collection of riddles; and he was the best, most "spiritual" commentator who could bring the greatest amount of ingenuity to their solution. "There was more of Christ in Moses than in Matthew:" and Genesis was more evangelical than the Epistle to the Romans. The harder and drier the shell, the richer was the kernel. A genealogy was more than a psalm, and a biography out of the Book of Judges conveyed profounder meanings than the record of an apostolic life. History became parable, and facts were turned into metaphors. If the doctrine of Atonement was sought, it was in Rahab's scarlet line;* and if the might of the Enemy of souls was to be set forth, it was from Job's Leviathan.† "The key of the kingdom," writes one, "is the knowledge of secrets."‡ So, with Origen, Jael is the church, Sisera the carnal man: Ai, Libnah, Lachish, represented the powers of darkness that tyrannize over the soul, and the overthrow of these strongholds is

* Clement of Rome, 1 Ep. to Cor. xii.

† Gregory the Great.

‡ The Clementine Recognitions, a work probably of the fourth century.

the casting down of spiritual tyrannies. In the earlier history, Jacob's well typified the Scripture; its waters, the Redeemer. Earlier still, the history of the Tower of Babel, and of its builders' dispersion, contains a spiritual meaning of such dignity that Origen fears to reveal it.* These are among the simplest illustrations of the principle of exposition, which found in him its most illustrious advocate.

2. In more modern times also this system of interpretation has had its supporters. The distinguished Hebrew scholar Cocceius, in the seventeenth century, "maintained that every passage has as many meanings as it can be made to bear; and regarded everything in the Old Testament as typical of Christ and His Church." He has had many followers: each of course with his own set of imaginative interpretations, of which Bishop Jeremy Taylor† has well said: "Of these things there is no beginning and no end, no certain principles and no sound conclusion.‡"

* Against Celsus, Book v., p. 250.

† Sermon on Ministerial Duties.

‡ As an undoubtedly interesting, though, as we hold, profoundly mistaken specimen of this style of exposition in the present day, see "Types of Genesis," by the Rev. A. Jukes (Second Ed., Longmans, 1863). On Gen. xx., for instance, Mr. Jukes writes thus: "Throughout this book [of Genesis] every man or woman sprung from Adam figures (if we take the inward application) some mind or affection which by nature or grace springs out of human nature. Abraham is the spirit of faith. Sarah, speaking broadly, is the principle of the New Covenant. What is Abimelech? He was a Philistine. On turning to the chapter (x. 13, 14), which gives

3. Unquestionably there are some striking analogies obvious to every reader of scripture, which it is perfectly legitimate to use in the illustration of truth.* For instance, in the wanderings of Israel in the wilderness, and their struggle for the land of Canaan, it is impossible not to see the soul's pilgrimage and conflict; or, to come to New Testament times, the ship that bore the Apostles may well typify the

us the development of the seeds which multiplied on resurrection-ground, we read that the Philistines were the children of Mizraim or Egypt. Egypt is sense; outwardly, those who live the life of sense, that is, in seen things. The Philistine is only the same spirit, in rather a different aspect, and at a further stage. Thus, if Egypt figures worldly wisdom, that knowledge through the senses which cannot really know God, the Philistine represents the further attainments of the same, when it is seen attempting to enter into heavenly things. For the Philistine stretches out toward the land of Canaan, but he would enter that land without circumcision, without passing the wilderness, and without crossing Jordan or the Red Sea. Such is the Philistine, knowledge derived from sense, which seeks to enter into heavenly things without death and resurrection. It is a race famed for giants, but with all their might they cannot possess the promised land. Knowledge derived from sense is not elect: it cannot inherit, though it may seek to intrude into heavenly things."

Accordingly, the ingenious author sees in the attempt of Abimelech to take Sarah, the endeavour of knowledge to take the precious things of faith. The attempt fails. Faith owns its own relationship with the New Covenant (Abraham with Sarah), and then "knowledge strengthens faith and gives it many gifts which may serve for the veiling or adorning of the truth." See verses 14, 16, pp. 240, 241.

* See Gal. iv. 24, "which things are an allegory," *i. e.* "susceptible of an allegorical use,"—compare further Gen. ii. 2

church upon the waves "of this troublesome world," while their labours as fishermen were taken by the highest authority as representing their spiritual work. The miracles of Christ again were undoubted emblems of His greater beneficence, in opening the eyes of the blinded soul, hushing the storm of wilful passion, and raising to life the spiritually dead. These things are all "double one against another." "We may," says the great William Tyndale, "borrow similitudes or allegories from the Scriptures, and apply them to our purposes, which allegories are no sense of the Scriptures, but free things, beside the Scripture altogether, in the liberty of the Spirit," "Such allegory" he says again, proveth nothing: it is a mere simile. The literal sense proveth, or supporteth the allegory." And again, "*God is a Spirit, and all His words are spiritual, and His literal sense is spiritual.*"*

III. We plead then for the simple, grammatical sense of Scripture, and from this, indeed, would draw "liberal applications," "infinite meanings:" yet not as we interpret riddles, but as we explore great truths. And to return to our main question, we define the spiritual understanding as the capacity of apprehending

with Heb. iv. 4. See also Eph. v. 23—32. Compare further Ps. xix. 4 with Rom x. 18, and Deut. xxx. 12 with Rom. x. 6, 7. Where the sacred writers apply a fact or an incident allegorically, we may do so on their authority: but where unauthorized by Scripture the attempt is always hazardous. See further in Prof. J. J. Conybeare's Bampton Lectures for 1824, on "The secondary and spiritual interpretation of Scripture."

* "Obedience of a Christian man."

spiritual truth; a power dependent, first and chiefly, upon *sympathy*.

1. We all know in ordinary matters what a spiritual understanding is. Why is it, for instance, that in music two men will listen to the same strain, one of whom will glow with rapture, the other remain totally unmoved? The latter, we say, has no *soul* for it. Or, to take a nearer illustration still: there are persons in the world who cannot understand goodness; who do not believe in the joys that it brings. Speak to the niggardly, miserly man of the satisfactions of benevolence; he cannot comprehend them; his joy is to take, not to give; to hoard, not to distribute. You could never prove to him that "it is more blessed to give than to receive;" whereas the generous soul requires no proof at all: he feels it at once. So we may hear some men argue that there is no such thing as disinterested benevolence in the world; it is all self-love under a disguise. We tell them of noble charities, of self-denying heroisms; they will but sneer at our enthusiasm, will explain all into fanatic folly, or will set themselves to discover some ignoble motive. Their own law of life is self-interest: and they can conceive of no law beyond.

2. All this may be applied to the written word. Manifold are its teachings; but at every step it makes its appeal to the sympathies of an awakened heart. It sets forth the character of God in its holiness and glory; how can this be understood but by those whose spirits have been quickened into sympathy with infinite excellence? It reveals the Saviour, in the

unsullied purity of His life, the sublime compassion of His death, the varied greatness of His enterprise of mercy; and how can these be comprehended by the man who looks on from an opposite sphere of worldliness and sin, who feels not that he is lost, and has never yearned for redemption? No: the Scriptures appeal to our deepest wants, our holiest emotions, our brightest hopes; but if the want be unfelt, if the affection slumber, if the hope have never been aroused, to what purpose is the appeal? It is music to the deaf; it is the brilliancy of colour to the blind! "The preaching of the cross," says an apostle, "is foolishness to them who believe not." It is foolishness, for it pre-supposes a necessity which they have never felt. The burden of sin is strange to them; how then can they care for the promise of deliverance? Never have they stood in the light of infinite holiness; how inexplicable to them must be the agony of Gethsemane, or the dying cry: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me!"

Said a learned Unitarian divine to John Newton, "I have examined every word in the Greek and Hebrew Scriptures many times, and I have never found in them the doctrine of Atonement." "Yes," replied the sagacious old man, "I remember I once went to light my candle with the extinguisher on." The failure was as complete in one case as in the other, and for much the same reason.

3. Who then can truly understand the Scriptures? The man, we reply, who understands the deepest needs of his own heart, who has felt himself a sinner, and

has cried for deliverance; who longs to be renewed, and whose sympathies are in some measure attuned to infinite love. It is when Christ dwelleth in the heart by faith, when the soul is rooted and grounded in love, that it is able to "comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge."

"We receive but what we give," writes a great poet. The eye can only perceive what is first in the soul. "I do not see all that in Nature," said a friend standing before a wondrous picture by a noble modern artist. "No," was the painter's reply, "don't you wish you could?" By a strict analogy it is affirmed respecting the highest spiritual truth: "He that loveth not, knoweth not God, for God is Love."*

4. This is the ground, then, that we would take with every eager enquirer, with every perplexed questioner. Some who will read these pages perhaps know what it is to be harassed with sceptical doubts on inspiration. After all, is this Book in reality from God? Let the great Teacher reply: "If any man be willing to do God's will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself."† The words promise satisfaction to every earnest soul, on condition of readiness to obey the will of God, whatever that will may be. To the humble and sincere, the revelation is its own witness. Ask you, how I am to know my Father's voice? We reply in the words

* 1 John iv. 8. † John vii. 17.

of another, "How did the prodigal son know that it was his father that met him 'while he was yet afar off,' and 'fell on his neck and kissed him?'"* Or, to pass from parable to history, how did the blind man whom Jesus had healed know that the light of day dawned upon him? The Pharisees attempted to prove that somehow the miracle was a mistake, that there was nothing in it: "Jesus is a sinner!" But the poor man had his answer ready:—"Sinner or no, I cannot tell; one thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see." It was enough for him, if not for them: and no argument could invalidate that. So "he that believeth hath the witness in himself."

5. Thus, again, with regard to difficulties in doctrine. To some extent these may be solved by thought and study; but even more important is the preparation of the heart. Some who have laboured hardest for satisfaction have become bewildered by arguments, dazzled by striving to gaze at the sun. To them we would venture to say; Cease for a while your intellectual toils, they only weary you. Come down from those speculative heights in which you find it so difficult to breathe. Turn from controversy to prayer. Strive rather to perfect your character than to complete your creed. Endeavour to carry into the ordinary affairs of life a purer tone of feeling, a loftier integrity, a more expansive benevolence. Make a firmer stand against temptation: be doubly watchful over the state of your affections: keep the heart with all diligence. Attempt

* McLeod Campbell, "Thoughts on Revelation."

some practical Christian work: take a tract district, go into the Sunday School. There are many doctrines through which you cannot see your way, many texts that you cannot understand: but surely text and doctrine alike are plain when you read how Jesus said, "Suffer the little children to come unto me!" While thus engaged you will soon discern, with new clearness and beauty, the form of heavenly truth. Error you may not even thus escape on all points: but into *fatal* error you will assuredly not fall: and all your beliefs, whatever they may be, will bring you nearer to the God of Truth. "Hungering and thirsting after righteousness," you will "be filled." Nor this alone, for the higher beatitude will be yours, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall SEE GOD."

CHAPTER XIV.

THE BIBLE THE WORLD'S BOOK.

MUCH has been said in former papers of the position and privilege of the Jews as the chosen depositaries of divine revelation. One of the most wonderful things connected with Scripture is that the book of one nation should be at the same time the book of the world. In its outward form the Bible is intensely Jewish. Its language, its history, its associations, are all of the Hebrew race. To understand the letter of it, one must carefully study the habits and manners of the Jews, enter into their modes of thought, acquaint himself intimately with the geography of the land and the history of the people. Further, the Hebrew nation was one of the most exclusive on the face of the earth. That little community on the strip of land between the Mediterranean and the Jordan was severed in feeling, polity, religion, from all mankind; and ages of dispersion and adversity have not destroyed the isolation. Surely one of the most wonderful phenomena in all history is that the sacred books of such a people should have a meaning for the whole human race, and should seek and find acceptance in every land. Nor is this true of the

New Testament only. Our Lord and His apostles did indeed break through the old national restrictions, and proclaim their gospel to be for "every creature." But in doing so they proved that the older faith and the ancient records had in like manner a world-wide applicability. In both the Old and the New Covenants God speaks through the chosen people to the ear and heart of all.

In pursuing this topic it may be remarked that the Bible is adapted to *every nation*, to *every age of the world*, and to *every stage of experience in our earthly life.*

First, it belongs to every nation. This universal aspect of Scripture is in truth one of the strongest marks of its divine origin. The fact stands absolutely alone in the literature and religion of the world. "Every other assumed revelation has been addressed to but one phase of humanity. They have been adapted to one age, to one people, or one peculiar style of human thought. Their books have never assumed a cosmical character, or been capable of any catholic expansion. They could never be accommodated to other ages, or acclimated to other parts of the world. They are indigenous plants, that can never grow out of the zone that gave them birth. Zoroaster never made a disciple beyond Persia or its immediate neighbourhood; Confucius is wholly Chinese, as Socrates is wholly Greek."* Only Scripture

* Professor Tayler Lewis, "The Divine Human in the Scripture," p. 80.

speaks alike to the eastern and the western mind. "The Bible is the most *translatable* of books." Translations of other works are stiff, unfamiliar: they wear at the best an exotic aspect; it is generally difficult to read them. But in the tongues of all lands where the Scriptures are well translated they read like an original. There is no book so English as the English Bible: there is no book so German as the German Bible. Who but the scholar thinks of the Hebrew or the Greek original as he reads the living word? The British artisan is more at home with the Hebrew Psalmist than with the poets of his own land. The evangelic story has a stronger fascination for him than all the biographies and histories of his native literature. So is it also in far-off countries, of the most different modes of life, and of every varying degree of civilization. The missionary to the wild South Sea savages and to the polished Hindoos, to Africans and to Esquimaux, to the Buddhists of China and the Mahommedans of Egypt, still takes the Bible. In one land a written language has to be created, that the oracles of God may be given to the people; in another, the Sacred Volume enters into the circle of an antique and venerated literature; but in each case its adaptation to the human heart is at once made manifest. For it speaks to universal humanity—to men as SINNERS, and as NEEDING SALVATION, irrespective of other distinctions. In it all tribes and tongues may find a common meeting-place, and amid the questionings and oppositions of modern science this book still gives explicit proof that "God

hath made *of one blood* all nations of men for to dwell in all the face of the earth."

Secondly, the Scriptures are for all time.

With regard to all human teachings, we are compelled sorrowfully to feel that they will be superseded. The world will by-and-bye become wiser than its highest present wisdom; its most valued theories and maxims will become obsolete, and its most cherished systems of philosophy will give place to others yet more comprehensive and profound. Religions, too, though they may endure for centuries, grow antiquated, lose their power over mind and conscience, and perish. The writings which once were held "sacred" by reverential belief, and whose lightest word was regarded with trembling awe, become the laughing stock of a later generation. They have told out their tale, and human progress has passed beyond their greatest, deepest teaching.

But the Bible has shown its applicability to mankind, not only in the variety of human condition, but in the progression of human history. From age to age it has been proved that, as the leader of the Pilgrim Fathers said, "the Lord hath more light to break forth from His word." As "the thoughts of men have widened" through successive ages, the Bible has ever stimulated and encouraged the advance. It suited the simplicity of early generations, and it is equally adapted to the civilization and attainments of later times. Every domain of human knowledge brings its tributaries. It is crowned by science; and is itself the inspiration of humanity and justice. It is ever in the van of human

progress, wiser than man's highest wisdom, and purer than his holiest ideal. To borrow a familiar allusion, Scripture still cries *Excelsior!* to the intellect as it aspires to height after height of knowledge, power, and virtue.

We need never fear that the Bible can be superseded. It enshrines truths, latent yet, which will break forth into effulgence and power; with principles already recognised, but destined to hitherto undreamed of applications, even to problems that as yet have no existence. Many a prophecy, too, over which we now hang with troubled rapture, discerning only that amid the world's darkness there glimmers some mysterious and distant star, that seems destined to expand into a sun which shall bid all earthly shadows flee away, will be read by another generation in the light of its fulfilment. "And so shall the Bible remain 'unto the last syllable of recorded time' the great spiritual power of the world. It shall live until all history shall be seen to be but its fulfilment, and all the divine dealings with our race, from the beginning to the close of its career, to have had constant reference to its 'great salvation.'" "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away."

Many a book once had in honour, and mighty to mould the thoughts of generations, is now forgotten, or has become a relic, inestimable it may be to "bibliomaniacs," but of no interest to the world at large. Who reads now the romances that our grandfathers loved? Will posterity care to read ours? The

"English Poets" in their goodly completeness waken but faint echoes of the once thrilling music; and the sweetest songs of our own day have hardly force to reach the coming centuries. Homer may live on; and Shakespeare and Dante; are there any others? Or we may appeal to more popular books. John Bunyan will not always be read and loved as he is now; there may be generations that will know nothing of the Wicket Gate and the Interpreter's House. Our choicest hymns, too, have their day. What our predecessors used to sing with rapture, to us are melodies quaint and strange, and our own favourite strains will seem no longer appropriate or sweet to those who are to come. Our deepest and holiest emotions will clothe themselves in altered forms. But the Psalms are as fresh to-day as when their music was chanted in the Tabernacle, or softly breathed by the waters of Babylon. They are not for one age, but for all; in this universality we mark the surest proof of their inspiration. Nor is this true of the language of devotion only. The Oracles, in every part of them, address our entire humanity.

Thirdly, the Bible is adapted to every stage of man's spiritual history. It is emphatically the child's book. Many a little one loves it as associated with happy hours in the Sunday school, or with an affection more exquisite still, as one of the choicest treasures of a Christian home. He may understand as yet but little of its meaning, but already one and another sweet story of old, he scarcely knows how, has become lodged in his memory and heart. Eden and the Flood, Joseph and Moses, David the shepherd king, and

Daniel in the lions' den, are familiar as household words; while most tender and sacred of all is the tale of Bethlehem and Calvary. These records, and the simple lessons connected with them, are at present the child's Bible. Much of the Sacred Volume is as yet a sealed book,—entirely unregarded, or but faintly understood. As yet he has enough to enrich his understanding, to impress his heart, and to lead him to Jesus. But with growing youth the sense of need increases. Conviction of sin presses home upon the spirit; while Bible words give utterance to the sorrowing confession or the penitential prayer. The word of God now becomes "a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." Many a text, unobserved or misunderstood before, now starts into view as a terrible revelation of sin and of judgment to come; while promises remembered, yet hitherto unheeded, point the way to peace.

Scripture and human life thus interpret each other. All that is deep and true within the soul finds there a confirmation, while for the utmost and most unexpected spiritual need a supply is there prepared. The Bible *never fails.* In the green pastures, and beside the still waters of our most peaceful days, its truths and promises guide our way: and when the path is dark with the shadow of death, it presents the rod and the staff which comfort us. Our deeper necessities are the means often of disclosing its hidden wonders. As in this material world, the very darkness becomes a revelation of glory. Were it always day, we should never know the splendours of the universe. In the sunlight, earth seems very vast and beautiful, and the

blue sky is only its fair dome; but when night draws its veil over the scene, this world becomes a mere speck beneath our feet, and the firmament is crowded to its farthest depths with orbs of light. So in the sunshine of youth, of strength, of joy, we never suspect what fulness of light and blessedness "God hath prepared" in Scripture "for those that love Him." It is in the night of life, the hour of sorrow, of bereavement, or of spiritual darkness, that star after star beams forth from the written page—holy promise—wise instruction—gentle consolation. The resources of our Father's love are seen to be unfathomable,—

> "And darkness shows us worlds of light
> We never saw by day."

Very touchingly is this often illustrated in the history of the afflicted and the dying. "Bring me the book," said Sir Walter Scott, on his deathbed. "What book?" his attendant inquired, not knowing to which volume the dying author referred." "Can you ask?" was the reproving answer: "*there is but* ONE!"

When John Newton's memory failed in extreme old age, he used often to bless God that he never forgot the texts of Scripture which he wanted to recall to mind. This no doubt was partly due to long habit; but it arose also from the felt appropriateness of the passages that so spontaneously recurred. "In age and feebleness extreme" there was no need for other lore, but on these holy words his mind and heart could rest, and out of weakness be made strong.

How often, too, have Bible words been the last

utterance of the dying saint. The world is already forgotten; the last farewells with weeping friends have been exchanged; there remains now but one step, and in taking it the word of God is still a "lamp" to the trembling "feet," and a "light" to the untrodden "path." "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!" "Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly!"

Thus universal is the divine message, adapted to all hearts, supplying all spiritual need. In this respect, too, the Bible *stands alone.* No other voice can awake such echoes in all hearts. No other book ever brought to all humanity, in all ages, the consciousness of a common need and the pledge of a common salvation. By this world-wide adaptation it truly proves itself divine, and establishes also our responsibility, first, to *accept* it as a treasure to ourselves; and, secondly, to *circulate* it among all mankind. "I saw," says the seer of the Apocalypse, "an angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell in the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue and people."

CHAPTER XV.

CHRIST THE SUBSTANCE OF THE BIBLE.*

THAT "the Bible is full of Christ" is an assertion which may at first sight appear a mere figure of speech. A Christian poet devoutly exclaims of Scripture,—

> "Here I behold my Saviour's face,
> Almost in every page."

Is this mere poetry, we may ask, or literal truth? And, if the latter, how is the truth to be understood?

In considering these questions, it is necessary to recall the distinct and repeated testimony of the New Testament to the meaning and application of the Old. Thus, our Lord himself in rebuking the unbelief of the Jews, says, "Ye search the Scriptures, because in them ye think ye have eternal life: *and they are they which testify of me:* and ye will not come to me that ye might have life."† To His disciples, after His resurrection, he expounded *in all the Scriptures* the things concerning Himself (Luke xxiv. 27). See also Acts x. 43; xviii. 28; xxvi. 22, 23; xxviii. 23;

* For illustrations of this topic suited to very young readers, see Lecture XII. of "Lectures to Children on the Bible" by the present author.

† John v. 39, 40.

1 Cor. xv. 3, 4 (where mark the emphatic repetition of the words, *according to the Scriptures*); 1 Pet. i. 10—12, with other passages.

The same truth is taught in symbol. On the mountain of Transfiguration, Moses and Elijah appeared with Christ in glory, and "spake of His decease, which He should accomplish at Jerusalem" (Luke ix. 31). Undoubtedly these glorified saints from the ancient world represent respectively "the law and the prophets;" that is, the sum total of former divine revelations, which thus manifestly testify of Jesus and foretell His cross. So the song of heaven is "the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb" (Rev. xv. 3).

I. It will not be doubted that the NEW TESTAMENT is full of Christ. Its four evangelic histories are His biography. The supplement to these, called "the Acts of *the Apostles*," is rather the history of His continued working in the world;* while the Apocalypse is distinctly entitled "The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto Him to show unto His servants things which must shortly come to pass." The

* See especially Baumgarten's "Commentary." The first words of the Acts, "The former treatise have I made, of all that Jesus *began* both to do and teach," are taken by this learned and evangelical expositor as intimating that Christ's life on earth was a beginning, his life in heaven a continuance of the same divine working. The book might therefore appropriately be called "The Acts of the Risen Christ," as Stier has entitled his treatise on the sayings of Jesus, there recorded, "The Words of the Risen Saviour."

discourses in like manner, and the letters of the apostles, are occupied throughout with Him,—

"Him first, Him midst, Him last, Him without end."

We may sum up the testimony of these and similar passages thus:—

(1.) CHRIST *historically*, as most important to be known in the facts of His life, His death, His exaltation.

(2.) CHRIST *personally*, as the object of deepest and most devout affection, with trust, homage, gratitude, and every emotion which our hearts may cherish towards such a Friend, while the brightest hope of life is to be with Him for ever.

(3.) CHRIST *doctrinally*, as containing in Himself the sum of the divine will. As it is often expressed, *Christ is Christianity*. "It is true not only that the gospel is the gospel of Christ, but that it is Christ. It shines in Him as in a mirror, it lives in Him as in a body. Is there one principle of true grace that Christ's experience and history do not involve? 'In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.' Is *God* the prime idea of all religion? . . . 'He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father.' Is the *moral character* of God as important as His existence? Behold the 'image' of the invisible God, as He 'goes about doing good.' Is *reunion with God* the great need of degraded humanity? What can we see in His assumption of our flesh but a type, as well as a means, of the restored fellowship of the children of men with the living God? Do we want *law?* 'Walk even as

He walked.' Do we *die?* 'Christ, the firstfruits of them that slept.' Are we sighing for *immortality?* 'This is the true God, and eternal life.' Does the mystery perplex us of *evil and good?* 'Looking unto Jesus, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is now set down at the right hand of God.'"*

It is important to remember that the revelation of Christ is thus threefold. There is perhaps no happier sign of our times than the increasing prominence which our chief Christian teachers are giving to all that relates to the personality of the Son of God. His earthly life is more than ever the topic of devout and earnest study. The most popular religious books are those which attempt to set forth the meaning of that life, in all its stages and through all its wondrous deeds. Now we are bidden to "behold the man," and now to contemplate the Incarnate God. And it is impossible to gaze too stedfastly upon the glory of that example, too reverently to listen to those words of wisdom, or with too lowly an admiration to bow before the Word made Flesh. But even here lies a subtle danger, into which some at least of our religious instructors seem to have fallen. It is possible so to study the life as to neglect the meaning of the death, to exalt the biography and to depress the cross, to portray the character of JESUS, and to forget the office of THE CHRIST. "Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?" Let us answer with Peter in

* Abridged from the late Rev. A. J. Morris.

the words of his "first Apostle's Creed"—the earliest and the best: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God." "The Christ" is "the anointed," a title declaring Him priest and king: setting forth at once His intercession and His royalty, His power with God and His power over men: "in the midst of the throne," . . . "a Lamb as it had been slain." Without this twofold revelation of Him, there could be no Gospel.

II. Keeping these thoughts in view, we remark further, that in the same threefold sense, the OLD TESTAMENT is full of Christ.

Here we do not specially discuss the express predictions of His advent, life, and death. These have been noted in Chapter V. on "The Word of Prophecy." But, following another train of thought, we may observe that in the Old Testament we still discern:—

Christ historically, as prefigured both by history and type.

Christ personally, as acting in the administration of the world's affairs.

Christ doctrinally, as the end of all the divine dealings with men.

1. Type and history throughout the Old Testament are strangely intermingled. There are institutions, such as those of the Mosaic economy, ordained for a specific purpose; and as the Epistle to the Hebrews, together with many another passage, shows us, this purpose throughout was to lead to Christ. Thus Abraham and his seed were set apart that the true seed might be revealed (Gal. iii. 16). The temple,

"beautiful for situation," the "joy of the whole earth" - the earthly dwelling-place of God,—was to lead the thoughts of men to Him in whom "dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead bodily" (Col. ii. 9). The burnt offering prefigured His perfect sacrifice (Lev. i. 4; Heb. x. 10). His was the sprinkled blood upon the mercy seat (Rom. iii. 25; Heb. ix. 12). The priesthood through all successive generations was but the ordained type of the One High Priest who should come (Heb. x. 11, 12). The passover throughout was typical of Him: in the provision of the lamb to be slain (John i. 29; 1 Cor. v. 7; Rev. xiii. 8); a spotless victim (1 Pet. i. 19); whose blood was to be sprinkled on the houses of Israel (Heb. x. 22; xii. 24); but whose bones might not be broken (John xix. 33, 36); a pledge of deliverance (Rev. xv. 3); and of divinely-provided sustenance (John vi. 53—55). So minute, indeed, is the correspondence here between type and antitype that the proof of divine foresight and arrangement becomes irresistible. The law is our "guide" * to Christ (Gal. iii. 24).

But history also is typical. That is, as explained in the chapter on prophecy, a *divine idea* is traceable through the course of human events, manifesting itself in different forms of providential and human action, all of which summed themselves up in the Redeemer. Thus we may see Christ in the offering of Isaac, in the

* The "Schoolmaster" of this passage denotes literally the "pædagogue" of classic days, not the teacher, but the slave whose business it was to take the child to the teacher, and to take care that the lessons were properly prepared.

sorrows, temptations, and exaltation of Joseph, throughout the whole career of Moses, and in the royalty, conquests, and predicted supremacy of David. In these and similar cases analogies are multiplied. The inspired writers of the New Testament are fearless in their application to the Son of man of words and incidents from almost every part of ancient Scripture. In a word, whensoever the divine purpose embodies itself in the words and deeds of men, it was to shadow forth a yet higher embodiment of the same in the person and work of Him whom God would send. Thus all the ages bring their unconscious testimony to the CHRIST OF GOD.

2. The Saviour appears personally in the great events and crises of Old Testament history.

The very first verse in the Bible points to Him: "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." But by Christ all things were made (John i. 3; Heb. i. 2). In Him, and Him only, the invisible God has been "declared" to man (John i. 18; Col. i. 15). Hence we doubt not it was He who came "in the cool of the day" to meet the first transgressors (Gen. iii. 8); while, as the Angel of the Covenant, His transient visits hallowed many a spot in the world which He had already made His own. His voice it was that spoke comfort to Hagar by Beer-lahai-roi (Gen. xvi. 13). He came with the two angels to Abraham and to Lot, in the day of Sodom's doom (xviii; xix). He was the God of Bethel (xxviii. 16—19; see John i. 51); the God of Peniel (xxxii. 24; Hos. xii. 4); the Angel who redeemed Israel from all

evil (xlviii. 15, 16); the God of the burning bush (Exod. iii.); the protecting Guide of Israel (xxiii. 20, 21; xxxii. 34; Isa. lxiii. 8, 9); the "Captain of the Lord's host" (Josh. v. 14); the Deliverer of the three Jews in the fiery furnace of Babylon (Dan. iii. 25); and "the Messenger (or Angel) of the Covenant" of whom Malachi speaks (iii. 1). The argument by which our exposition of this and similar passages is sustained is very simple. They who beheld "the Angel" are also said to have "seen God." Hence the Angel is God made manifest, and in these various revelations we have prefigured the incarnation of the eternal Word.*

3. The preceding remarks lead to the conclusion, which also may be sustained on independent grounds, that the *doctrine* of Christ pervades the whole of the Old Testament Scripture.

"There is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." Nor has there ever been. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were as truly saved by Christ as were Peter, James, and John. Already His mediation was accepted, His mediation prevailed. True, we must not imagine that the saints of old had full insight into the great spiritual work foreshadowed by the types and prophecies amid which they passed their lives. "By faith," as the apostle shows, they were saved; and faith is ever essentially the same,—a self-renouncing, simple, entire reliance

* For a full elucidation of these points, see Dr. Pye Smith's "Scripture Testimony to the Messiah," and Hengstenberg's "Christology."

upon God. Thus the "church of the Firstborn" lived on earth, and the Son of God was their Elder Brother, even as He is ours. "Both in the Old and New Testament everlasting life is offered to mankind by Christ, who is the only mediator between God and man, being both God and man. Wherefore they are not to be heard which feign that the old fathers did look only for transitory promises."*

And thus we behold at last the four and twenty elders around the throne of heaven; typifying surely the accord of the two dispensations—the twelve patriarchs and the twelve apostles,—while their voices all alike commingle in the strain, "Thou art worthy, for Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation. Worthy is the Lamb. Amen!

* Art. VII., Church of England.

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